



Root Decay

Root Decay is not the same as normal tooth decay. It affects mainly patients who are retired or approaching retirement, as well as certain patients with Chronic Medical Conditions.

Receding gums unveil a tooth's roots. However the root of the tooth doesn't have the same hard enamel coating found on top of the tooth.

Rather, our roots are covered by cementum, which anchors the tooth to the jawbone.

Cementum is hard as bone but is softer than enamel.

They are not as good at protecting the tooth as the enamel. Hence root decay progresses much more rapidly than decay in enamel and damage the pulp of the tooth

Plenty of dental problems come with the exposure of cementum -- it's yellow in color, making for a less attractive smile.

But the real tragedy is that cementum is not designed to protect the tooth like enamel and can leave exposed roots more susceptible to decay.

To make matters worse, root decay is good at hiding out. Root decay lurks along the gum line or in between teeth where it's hard to detect with the naked eye.

Although you may not feel any pain, there are some telltale signs to look for -- tooth discoloration or "notches" at the gum line are often symptoms of root decay. However, X-rays are the only way to accurately locate any decay between teeth.



Prevention Is the Best Medicine

If your gums have receded, you should take measures to prevent root decay.

Reduce Sugar

Diets high in sugar will feed the dental plaque-causing bacteria found on your roots, so stay away from sweets!

Keep your teeth wet

Dry mouth also increases your chances of getting root decay -- saliva is needed to wash away food debris and neutralize acid. Without it, exposed roots may be more prone to acid attacks and resulting decay.

Drinking lots of water, sucking on sugar-free candy or chewing sugarless gum can help prevent dry mouth.

Regular Dental Hygienist Visits

If you suffer from receding gums or have just reached "that age," regular dental visits allow your dentist to check for tooth root decay.

Preventive measures also include gum disease treatment for receding gums: An ultrasonic dental cleaning removes dental tartar from under the gum line and helps ward off the possibility of gum disease.

If necessary, a gum graft can help restore gums to their natural state.

Good Home Dental Care

At home, soft brushing with fluoride toothpaste will also help keep your gums intact and prevent decay.

With age comes the wisdom to make excellent health choices -- in the time it took to read this article, you've only gotten a couple of minutes older, but your knowledge of root decay has grown immensely.

With a little extra care, you can draw the curtain on the root decay problem and truly reap the benefits of your golden years!



Prompt treatment is essential

Since root decay progresses rapidly it's important to treat it as early as possible. It is more difficult to treat than other surface cavities as the decay extends below the gum line.

Early signs of root decay may be treated with professional fluoride application. You may be prescribed fluoride toothpaste and an antiseptic mouthwash.

Once a cavity is formed it is filled like any other regular dental cavity. Tooth-colored fillings that bond to the root surface and release fluoride are preferred.

Filling a root cavity is very demanding due to their location and difficulties with moisture control. Hence there are chances of decay recurrence and the fillings may have shorter life span.

If the decay has spread to the pulp (innermost layer with nerves and blood vessels) of the tooth a root canal treatment may be advised.

If the tooth is beyond repair it may need to be extracted.

Why do Older Adults get Root Decay?

Older adults are more likely to get cavities on the roots of their teeth because:

1. They are more likely to have gum problems that expose root surfaces.
2. Root surfaces are softer than the top part of the tooth that is made up of enamel and get cavities faster.
3. Older adults are more likely to take medicines that cause dry mouth. Saliva or spit helps protect teeth from cavities. When there is less saliva there is less natural protection from cavities. If your mouth is dry do not suck on hard candies. This makes the cavities get bigger. Use sugar-free hard candies instead.
4. You may have trouble taking care of your mouth because of arthritis or other medical problem such as loss of eyesight. This raises the risk of getting root cavities.
5. If you have had a stroke you may not realize you have food stuck in your mouth, this can also add to your cavity risk.
6. Forgetfulness is a problem too. Leaving reminder notes for yourself to brush and floss is a good way to improve your oral health.
6. If you have lost some teeth already it may be harder to chew certain foods. You may choose foods that are easier to chew and are softer. It is very important to brush your teeth after meals with soft food that have starch like bread, potatoes and pasta. These soft foods contribute to cavities just like sugar.



What can I do to stop the sensitivity?

Good oral hygiene and diet are a good start as they reduce the amount of acid which is what causes the sensitivity.

Will these special toothpastes help?

Some do and some don't. It is best to try each out and see the result. Irrespective, you must maintain your brushing, flossing and sugar intake.

Toothpastes that are labeled "whitening" or "tartar control" can sometimes be too rough on receding gums and exposed roots, wearing away the root's protective layer.

Patients can be reasonably sure that their toothpaste is non-abrasive if it's labeled "sensitive".

How does Fluoride help?

Fluoride hardens the outer enamel layer of teeth, may stop a developing cavity, and gives you more resistance to future cavities.

What the best brushing method?

Use proper brushing technique. Angle the bristles of the brush along the gum line at a 45 degree angle and apply just enough pressure so the bristles slide under the gum line. Vibrate the brush while you move it in short back and forth strokes and in small circular motions.

Don't brush too hard. Consider using an electric toothbrush. They remove food, bacteria, and plaque very well, and they make it much easier to use less pressure.

These days, some advanced electric toothbrushes will even stop or alert you when you are pressing too hard. And don't forget to floss. Brushing harder won't get bacteria out from between the teeth.

DURAPHAT 5000 AND Root Decay

What is Colgate Duraphat 5000?

Colgate Duraphat 5000ppm fluoride toothpaste contains a higher level of fluoride than ordinary toothpaste.

Why would I need Duraphat 5000?

Clinical studies indicate that certain people who are at a higher risk of tooth decay can derive additional benefits from the daily use of Colgate Duraphat 5000ppm fluoride toothpaste.

How does Colgate Duraphat 5000 work?

The fluoride in Colgate Duraphat 5000ppm fluoride toothpaste can both help to reverse decay in the early stages and strengthen teeth to prevent decay. Fluoride works in several ways to:

- Reduce the formation of plaque acids
- Prevent mineral loss caused by plaque acid
- Promote remineralization of early decay

How should I use Colgate Duraphat 5000?

Use Colgate Duraphat 5000ppm fluoride toothpaste instead of regular fluoride toothpaste, brushing three times daily.

Why do you suggest fillings?

Sometimes when the destruction of the dentine is very severe and close to the nerve we will advise a filling to protect the tooth and prevent further damage.

In this case we are trying to keep the tooth alive and so it may be essential to put a hard layer (filling) on top of the dentine. This extra layer over the dentine reduces sensitivity and the risk of nerve exposure.

How do you put on the bonded fillings?

We clean away any film on the surface of the damaged tooth and then apply an etch, the filling is then bonded to the tooth structure using a light activate composite material. Simple as that!!

We then polish the surface to leave a smooth, easy to clean surface. Patients should take special care to keep the filling clean as it can become stained if it is not looked after.

These bonded filling rarely require an injection and apart from the taste of the etch the process is normally quite straight forward and painless.

But my old dentist said there was nothing I could do?

Perhaps when the old dentist was trained most people lived to 60, now they live to 80+. We see lots of new patients who come to us with abscesses in teeth with root decay and they are often very upset when they realize that they could easily have saved their teeth.

Are some people more susceptible?

Some patients have very weak bone around their teeth and if their teeth are positioned too far outwards then dentine exposure is more likely.

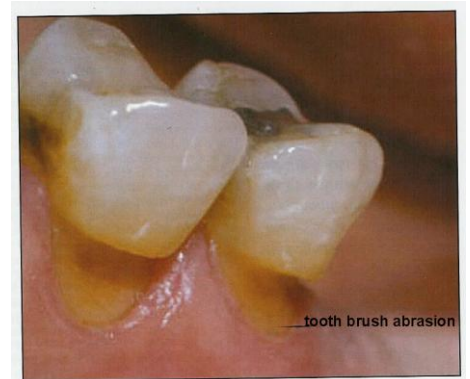
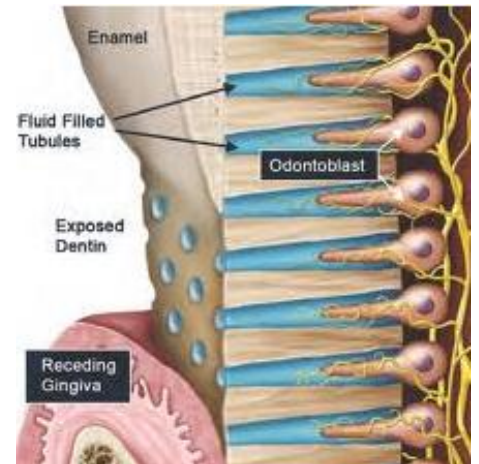
In our experience even the most susceptible patients can arrest the destruction and stop it reaching the point where active treatment is needed.

But it all depends on whether the problem is identified quickly and whether the patient uses active preventative measures.

What would happen if I ignore the Root Decay?

Eventually the cavity will eat into the nerve and the tooth will then probably die, meaning an abscess may form and the tooth may need to be crowned or even extracted.

Now that patients are living much longer we need to keep our teeth for much longer too. Ignoring a problem now may mean big problems further down the line.



OZONE Therapy

Ozone is a new revolution which is changing the face of Dentistry

PAIN FREE

For early decay, this hi-tech treatment involves no injections, no drilling, and is totally painless. It is ideal for total prevention in children.

There absolutely no sensation as the ozone gently bathes the infected area. In twenty seconds, 99.9% of the caries (decay) producing bacteria are eliminated. The ozone is pumped away, broken down into oxygen again-and the tooth is caries-free without pain. It is as simple as that.

SAFE

Healozone delivers ozone directly onto the bacteria in a sealed environment and is proven to be completely safe.

EFFECTIVE

Ozone kills 99.9% of all decay producing bacteria in 20 seconds! It is used in dentistry to stop and even reverse small cavities. It is also being used in other aspects of Dentistry.

- Pain free
- Prevents Tooth Decay
- Drill free in early decay
- Ideal for children and Nervous Patients
- Safe and effective prevention
- Minimum intervention
- Can reverse small early Tooth Decay
- Reduces Post Treatment Pain and promotes healing

What Is Ozone?

Ozone is a form of Oxygen.

Like oxygen, ozone is also a gas. It is that fresh clean smell that you find at high altitudes and after thunderstorms. Ozone is therefore named after the Greek word Ozein, to smell.

Ozone is present all around us in the air that we breathe. It protects us from harmful sunlight.

Because Ozone is also a powerful oxidizing agent, it has been used widely for the past 40 years to purify water systems and the water you drink.

Which Patients Benefit From Ozone?

Clearly, Ozone Therapy appeals to a large patient target group from young to old throughout all generations, because most people are afraid of the pain involved with caries (cavity) treatment.

But the caries (cavity) treatment with ozone puts an end to all this!

Can you describe the Ozone Treatment?

The Ozone gas applies through a silicon cup.

The ozone gas is applied which penetrates a few millimeters into the infected tooth through a silicone cup to kill the bacteria and neutralize harmful acids in the mouth. Then a sealant may be applied along with this treatment to protect the tooth from further damage.

After the ozone treatment, the saliva in the mouth, mouthwash, toothpaste or special varnishes can act to harden the tooth again.

The tooth is checked after about 4-8 weeks that this is happening successfully, and at this point, any marks or staining on the tooth can also be covered up.

What Are The Advantages Of Using Ozone Therapy?

90% of treated teeth are expected to respond positively providing that the patient follow the care instructions.

The treatment restores the balance of bacteria and, if followed up by the use of special mouthwashes, toothpastes and gels, can remove the root cause of cavities and strengthen the enamel on the treated tooth.

Research indicates that up to 99% of teeth treated did not get worse. No drilling and filling is required.

Ozone treatment is a perfect addition to the normal treatment as it kills all the bacteria in the cavity, and this leaves an area where the pulp can heal itself.

In addition the ozone treatment reducing the post operative pain and often eliminates it completely.

