

Dental Erosion

Advice for patients who show signs of dental erosion

Dental erosion is the loss of tooth enamel and dentine caused by acid attack. Enamel is the hard, outer part of the tooth. Once the enamel is worn away, the softer dentine is exposed and wears away even more quickly, leading to pain and dentine sensitivity.

Erosion appears as hollows in the tooth and a general wearing away of the biting edges of the teeth, making them appear shorter, uneven and more yellow.



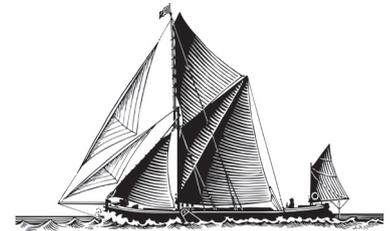
The cause of dental erosion is either acidic food/drinks (fruit, juices, carbonated drinks) or acids produced by the stomach which can then come up into the mouth. The most common medical causes of erosion are gastro-oesophageal reflux, hiatus hernia or vomiting due to bulimia/alcohol abuse.

Avoid having too much fruit in your diet. It is best to have it as part of a main meal rather than in between meals so as to reduce the number of acid attacks. Drink fruit juices through a wide bore straw to avoid any of the acidic juice from touching your teeth.

NEVER brush your teeth straight after having anything acidic to eat or drink. If you do then you will rub away the softened outer part of the tooth, speeding up the process of erosion. Wait for at least one hour before brushing your teeth.

Avoid using a hard toothbrush or too abrasive a toothpaste. Using a daily fluoride mouth rinse (such as **Swirl**) or applying **Tooth Moose** on a regular basis will make the teeth less sensitive and more resistant to being eroded away.

Early dental erosion can be treated by bonding composite filling material over the exposed and worn areas of the dentine and enamel.



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Tips

- Diet fizzy drinks can be just as harmful to your teeth as the sugary versions
- Acidic drinks should be drunk quickly without holding in or swishing around your mouth
- Still water and milk are 'tooth-friendly' as they help to neutralise acids in the mouth
- Chewing sugar-free gum after meals increases saliva production which also cancels out acids