

Dental erosion

Dental erosion is the chemical dissolution of tooth enamel and the underlying tooth structures, not caused by bacterial action. Erosion can lead to tooth wear, sensitivity, and in severe cases, even problems with the bite.

The Development and Symptoms of Erosion

Erosion begins when the tooth surface is repeatedly exposed to acidic substances. This can occur, for example, by consuming certain types of foods and drinks or due to certain diseases. Erosion is identified by a decrease in the shine of the teeth, wear on the tooth surfaces, and teeth being overly sensitive to cold, heat, and sweetness. The dentin often becomes visible as slightly brownish flat areas where the enamel has been eroded away. Over time, erosion can cause bite problems and chipping of the teeth.



Factors Causing Erosion:

- **Foods and beverages:**
 - Soft, sports, and energy drinks
 - Flavoured mineral waters
 - Juices
 - Alcoholic drinks

- Lemon and other acidic fruits
- Acidic berries and their products
- **Diseases and conditions:**
 - Reflux disease (the rise of stomach acid into the oesophagus)
 - Bulimia and other eating disorders (vomiting acidic stomach contents)
 - Certain diseases and medications that can reduce saliva production or alter its composition

Prevention and Treatment of Erosion

To lower the risk of erosion, it is important to avoid acidic foods and beverages and to take comprehensive care of oral health. It is especially important to limit acid attacks to a maximum of 5 - 6 times a day (note: snacking counts) and avoid the slow and prolonged consumption of acidic products, which prolongs the teeth's exposure to acids. Additionally, it is recommended to:

- Rinse the mouth with water after consuming an acidic product or take a xylitol product
- Use fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day
- Wait 30 minutes before brushing teeth after consuming acidic food or drink

If erosion damage is present, the dentist may recommend several treatment options depending on the severity of the damage. However, the primary goal is to stop the progression of erosion. Treatments may include fillings, prosthetic crowns, bite raising and/or a bite guard.

Remember, prevention is key in managing dental erosion. Regularly schedule appointments with your dentist, who can help identify potential risk factors and design a personalized treatment plan.