

What is Tooth Wear **AND HOW TO PREVENT IT**

Tooth wear is the term used to describe the progressive loss of a tooth's surface due to actions other than those which cause tooth decay or dental trauma. Tooth wear increases with age. This is a normal physiological process occurring throughout life, but accelerated tooth wear can become a problem.

Tooth wear is caused by three phenomena: erosion, attrition and abrasion.

Erosion is also a problem in individuals who suffer from gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) or from certain eating disorders (e.g., anorexia, bulimia). Another reason for erosion is results of frequent or inappropriate use of carbonated drinks (including sparkling water) and fruit juices with high levels of acidity.

Attrition is the progressive loss of hard tooth substances caused by mastication or grinding between opposing teeth. Attrition can be caused by clenching or grinding teeth (a condition known as **bruxism**), e.g., during sleep.

Abrasion is the progressive loss of hard tooth substances caused by mechanical actions other than mastication or tooth-to-tooth contacts. Abrasion is commonly associated with incorrect tooth brushing technique, giving rise to notching at the junction of the crown and root of teeth. It will also be seen in individuals who use their teeth as a tool (e.g., to remove bottle tops, to hold pins, clips or nails).

Prevention

In many cases these problems can be easily dealt with by correcting tooth brushing habits and avoiding the very frequent consumption of excessively acidic substances.

Use of a **Nightguard** can be very beneficial to those who grind and clench their teeth. With clenching, the mouth guard reduces the amount of pressure that is exerted on the upper and lower jaw.

If the problem has progressed to the extent that much of the tooth has been worn away, treatment may become necessary, to prevent further damage to the tooth, reduce sensitivity, and avoid damage to the dental nerve. There are many restorative techniques available, most of which use innovative white materials and adhesive technology:

Bonding - This procedure is carried out by your dentist when a groove has been cut into the neck of the tooth as it approaches the gum. A tooth-colored adhesive filling material is bonded to the surface of the tooth, filling in the cavity and protecting the tooth surface from further damage.

Crowns and Veneers - Where extensive damage has occurred, and much of the tooth surface has been destroyed these tooth-like restorations will strengthen and protect the tooth, as well as restoring the appearance.



Visit Dr. Fotek, to address tooth wear issues.

