

Tooth Sensitivity

Have you experienced sharp pain when you enjoy hot, cold, sweet and sour food, or when you clean your teeth? If the answer is yes, you may be suffering from tooth sensitivity provided that you do not have other oral problems such as tooth decay.

Even if you do not have any sensitive teeth, you are encouraged to read this pamphlet to prevent it.



What is Tooth Sensitivity?

Tooth sensitivity is mainly caused by exposure of dentine of the tooth to the oral environment. Dentine has numerous fine tubules which are connected to the pulp. When the nerve endings in the pulp are irritated by external stimulus, sharp pain is felt.

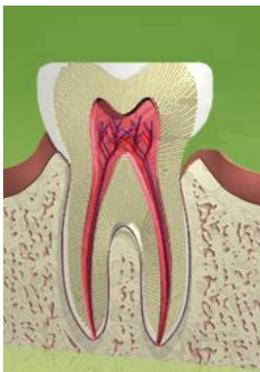
Dentine exposure

- *Dentine Exposure at the crown of the tooth*

The outermost layer of the crown is covered by enamel. If the enamel has been damaged, the dentine will no longer be protected.

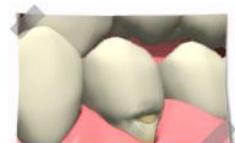
- *Dentine Exposure at the root of the tooth*

The dentine of the root of a tooth is covered by the gum. If there is gum recession, the dentine of the root will be exposed.



Dentine Exposure is caused by:

- Using a toothbrush with hard bristles.
- Brushing the teeth with excessive force or incorrect brushing technique, leading to gum recession and abrasion of the root surface.



- Gum disease, resulting from gum recession and exposure of root surfaces.



- Acid erosion of enamel due to frequent intake of highly acidic food or drinks.



- Habitual teeth grinding which wears off the enamel.



Management of tooth sensitivity

- Consult the dentist and learn the correct tooth brushing technique to prevent further abrasion of root surfaces.



- Use desensitizing toothpaste to relieve tooth sensitivity. Please consult your dentist before purchasing or using desensitizing toothpaste.
- If dentine has been exposed, the dentist may consider applying topical fluoride or putting a filling over the exposed surface to reduce the sensitivity.

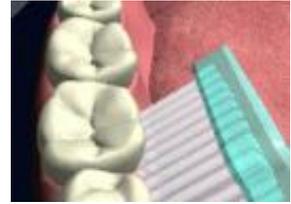
- If teeth grinding is severe, you should go to a dentist as soon as possible. The dentist will give appropriate treatment such as fabricating a "Mouth guard" to keep the teeth from further attrition.



- Other than tooth sensitivity, dental problems such as tooth decay, gum disease and cracked tooth may also lead to toothache. Therefore, if you have a toothache, please consult your dentist to find out the reasons behind it.

Prevention of tooth sensitivity

- Brush your teeth with a soft-bristle toothbrush.
- Brush gently with correct toothbrushing technique.
- Prevent gum disease by brushing your teeth twice a day and using dental floss, floss holder or interdental brush daily to properly remove the dental plaque on the tooth surfaces.



- Avoid biting on hard food such as bones or nuts to prevent wearing of enamel.
- Avoid frequent intake of highly acidic food or drinks such as fruit juices, sports drinks, soft drinks, red wine, white wine, etc., to prevent tooth erosion.
- Prevent tooth grinding by getting enough sleep and doing exercise regularly to relieve stress from daily life.