

You may have seen adverts on television about front teeth wearing thin. Tooth wear is caused by a number of things.

This leaflet will help you to identify the causes of tooth wear and to prevent the problem. Keep your teeth healthy for life!

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Family Dental Care

How to prevent toothwear

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What is Toothwear?

Your teeth may wear by a combination of:

- internal and/ or external acids, called erosion
- and/ or from clenching or grinding your teeth at night or during the day which means the teeth are in contact for much greater time than just from eating.

Where are damaging acids in the diet?

Laboratory studies have shown that the following types of drinks, foods and medication can erode your teeth:

- drinks containing citric acid – eg orange, grapefruit, lemon, blackcurrant;
- carbonated drinks;
- alcopops and designer drinks;
- cider;
- white wine;
- fruit teas (but not camomile);
- some sports drinks which contain acid;
- acidic fresh fruit – lemons, oranges,
- grapefruit – that are consumed with high frequency;
- pickles;
- chewable vitamin C tablets, aspirin, some iron preparations.

Internal acid comes from vomiting or regurgitating stomach contents.

What can I do to prevent erosion?

- Use anti erosion toothpaste containing 1,450 ppm fluoride twice daily. E.g. Pronamel
- Avoid frequent intake of acidic foods or drinks – keep them to mealtimes.
- Do not brush immediately after eating or drinking acidic food or drinks.
- Do not brush immediately after eating acidic food or vomiting.
- Finish a meal with a small piece of cheese or a drink of milk.

What is clenching or grinding?

This habit is stress related in the majority of cases but may sometimes be associated with a problem with how the top and bottom teeth come together. This can lead to discomfort in your jaw joints especially on waking may cause a clicking jaw joint. If this goes on for some time the teeth may get worn down. Teeth may become sensitive. Your dentist may take photographs or models of your teeth to check if this problem is progressing.

This most commonly affects the upper front teeth though can affect all. Teeth that have eroded and look glassy, become short and may easily chip away.

What can I do to prevent clenching or grinding?

- if you are aware of clenching or grinding your teeth in the daytime try to stop doing so.
- wear of a plastic night- time splint to reduce pressure from clenching/ grinding your teeth and help break the habit
- treatments aimed at reducing stress to help stop the problem. These range from counselling to de-stressing therapies or muscle relaxant medications.
- we may rebuild the teeth with resin material to prevent them wearing away further