

Acid Erosion

Acids in the mouth can dissolve away tooth surfaces. Given the chance, teeth will repair themselves through remineralisation. If acid is in the mouth too often, teeth cannot repair themselves and the hard tooth surface (enamel) becomes thinner, this is known as erosion.

Teeth can become extra sensitive to hot and cold food and drinks. Eroded teeth are also more likely to suffer from decay. The appearance of eroded teeth can also change, they can become translucent or yellowish in appearance, their shape can also be altered.

The main cause of erosion is too frequent consumption of certain kinds of food and drink. All fizzy drinks including diet brands and fizzy mineral water, sports drinks, all squashes and fruit juices are acidic to varying degrees. Pickles and citrus fruits are examples of acidic types of food

People with some illnesses (such as eating disorders) may suffer from erosion because of frequent vomiting, as stomach acids also erode teeth.

How can I prevent erosion?

Don't have acidic food and drink too often during the day. Try to have them only at meal times. And drink acidic drinks quickly, don't sip them and don't swish them round your mouth.

Between meals you should only have "safe" drinks which are not sugary or acidic. Milk and water are "safe" drinks. So are tea and coffee if you do not add sugar to them (you can use non sugar sweetener)

Snacking

You should try and avoid snacking between meals. If you do snack have "safe" snacks which are not sugary or acidic.

Safe snacks

- Ham or cheese sandwich
- Raw vegetables
- Fruit (not citrus)
- Bread
- Natural unsweetened yoghurt
- Cheese
- Milk
- Toast
- Breadsticks
- Nuts

Brushing

Because acids temporarily soften the tooth surface, don't brush your teeth immediately after eating or drinking. Where possible wait for an hour before brushing, this will allow time for your saliva to neutralise the acid.

You should always brush your teeth twice daily, and always use fluoride toothpaste.

How can we help?

Your dentist can identify erosion, pinpoint the causes and advise you how to prevent further damage.