

DENTAL CARIES



Did you know?

2.5 BILLION people worldwide are affected by untreated **dental caries** (tooth decay) in permanent teeth - the most common health condition globally.

WHAT IS DENTAL CARIES?

Also known as tooth decay, dental caries occurs when plaque (a sticky, clear film of bacteria) builds up on the teeth, often because it is not removed effectively through regular brushing and flossing. Plaque feeds on sugars in foods and drinks, producing acids that gradually damage the teeth.



RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS

Dental caries may not cause any symptoms at first. As it progresses, you may notice:

- ➔ White, brown or black spots on your teeth.
- ➔ Sensitivity to hot, cold or sweet foods and drinks.
- ➔ Toothache or pain in or around a tooth.
- ➔ Pain or discomfort when biting or chewing.
- ➔ A visible hole or cavity in a tooth.
- ➔ Food frequently getting trapped in or around a tooth.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Dental caries is largely a preventable disease.



Brush for 2 minutes, 2x a day with fluoride toothpaste to remove food and plaque.



Clean between your teeth daily. Use floss or interdental brushes to remove plaque from areas your toothbrush cannot reach.



Limit free sugars. Frequent sugar intake increases your risk of dental caries.



Avoid tobacco use. Tobacco can have long-term effects on your teeth and gums.



Limit alcohol consumption. Alcoholic drinks can contain acids and sugars that damage teeth.



Visit your dental team regularly. They can detect early signs of dental caries and prevent it from progressing.

WHY EARLY ACTION MATTERS

If left untreated, dental caries can make eating and carrying out daily activities more difficult, while also affecting confidence, social interactions, well-being, and overall quality of life. With early action, dental caries can often be stopped or reversed before it causes pain, infection or permanent tooth damage.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

Oral health is important at every age. There are a series of fact sheets available to support you and your family at every life stage: infants, children, adults and older adults.



World Oral
Health Day
20 March



EVERYONE,
EVERYWHERE
IS INVITED
TO JOIN US

#GENERATIONSMILE
#WOHD27

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