

THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

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What Causes Sensitive Teeth?



Do you cringe from discomfort or pain when you drink a hot beverage or bite into a popsicle? If so, you may be suffering from sensitive teeth. Tooth sensitivity is a fairly common problem triggered by hot or cold foods and drinks, or even by breathing cold air.

Causes of Sensitive Teeth

Exposed dentin is usually to blame. Dentin is the tissue that makes up the core of each tooth. On the crown of the tooth, the dentin is covered by a protective coating of enamel. When this enamel wears away or decays, the dentin becomes exposed and vulnerable to sensations, including pain.¹

Gum disease could also be responsible for sensitivity. If gum disease isn't treated, gum tissues can separate from the teeth and form pockets that provide a home for bacteria. Gum disease can progress until the bone and other tooth-supporting tissues are damaged, leaving the root surfaces of teeth exposed and sensitive.

Ways to Prevent Tooth Sensitivity

Proper oral hygiene is essential in preventing tooth decay, gum disease and pain from sensitive teeth. If you brush your teeth incorrectly or too aggressively, you may injure your gums and expose tooth roots. Brushing with too much pressure can wear the thin protective coating off the root surface leaving sensitive dentin exposed. Also, avoid consuming highly acidic foods and beverages, which can wear away enamel over time.

Ease up on whitening toothpastes and bleaching treatments, as they may increase tooth sensitivity. Regular dental checkups are also important so your dentist can catch problems early-on and treat them before they become more serious.



How to Floss Your Teeth: A Step-by-Step Guide



Most people know that they should floss once a day, but not everyone knows why. Brushing your teeth does a great job of removing plaque from tooth surfaces, but brushing alone isn't enough to keep tooth decay and gum disease at bay. With a proper flossing regimen, you can remove left over food particles and plaque from the places a toothbrush cannot easily reach.

Follow these 6 steps to help you floss perfectly every time:

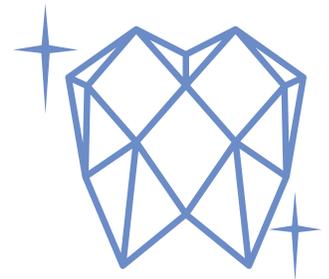
1. Take about 16-20 inches of dental floss and wrap it around your middle fingers, leaving only about an inch or two of floss to work with.
2. Holding the floss with your thumbs and index fingers, carefully guide the floss between your teeth and in gentle sawing motion pop the floss between the tooth contacts, being careful not to jam it into the gums.
3. Once between the teeth, curve the floss into a C-shape, pressed tight against one tooth. Then, slide the floss up and down the tooth and root surface, going just under the gumline. Never force the floss further than it wants to go because this can irritate or cut your gum tissue. Repeat this process on the tooth on the other side of the space.
4. To remove the floss, use the same back and forth sawing motion to bring the floss up and away from the space between your teeth.
5. Repeat this action for each tooth, using clean sections of floss as you move from space to space. Don't forget the back side of the last tooth in each corner of your mouth.
6. Dispose of the dental floss in a trash can. It's important to never re-use a piece of floss as it will not be as effective and could leave behind bacteria that you don't want in your mouth.

If you have any questions about the above steps or the right kind of floss for you, we recommend talking to your dentist or dental hygienist. They are experts at flossing and happy to help!

SMILE STATS



No two teeth are the same. Each tooth in your mouth has its own unique profile, and teeth vary widely from person to person.²



Tooth enamel is made up of mostly calcium and phosphate and is the hardest part of your body.³



Children smile nearly 400 times per day, while adults smile about 20 times per day.⁴

Do Your Kids Know What to do in a Dental Emergency?



If your child's mouth is injured, the situation should be addressed quickly to reduce the risk of permanent damage. Since you can't be with your kids 24/7, it's important for them to know how to handle a dental emergency. Here's a guide that can help your kids understand steps to take and the importance of fast action in case of emergency.

Knocked Out Permanent Tooth

It's OK if a baby tooth falls out or even if it's accidentally knocked out. Don't ever put a baby tooth back in because it could damage the permanent tooth growing below the gums. Once permanent teeth start to come in, try these talking points with your children:

- When a permanent tooth falls out, you need to act fast. There are steps you can take right away, but it is important to see your dentist within 30 minutes.
- Call your parent or guardian immediately and let them know what happened, so they can call your dentist and take you to their office right away.
- Pick up the tooth by the top part (crown), not the root.
- If the tooth is dirty, don't scrub it. Rinse it gently with water, cleaning off any dirt but leaving any tissues in place.
- For older kids and teens, gently try to put the tooth back in the socket but don't force it. If you get it in place, bite gently on it or hold it in with your finger.
- If you can't figure out which way the tooth goes back in or it doesn't go easily into place, put it in milk or a container of your saliva. Don't wrap the tooth in a cloth or store it in tap water.

Chipped or Broken Permanent Tooth

Seeking immediate help for a chipped or broken permanent tooth can prevent infection and increase the chances of saving the tooth. As with a tooth that's been knocked out, have your parent or guardian call your dentist right away.

- Gather the pieces of the tooth but don't worry if you can't find them all. Your dentist will be able to replace missing pieces if your tooth is repairable.
- Gently rinse your mouth and any broken pieces of the tooth with warm water.
- If there is bleeding, stop it by biting gently on a moist, clean cloth or gauze.

While you and your child can't prevent all injuries, knowing what to do in a dental emergency can help minimize the damage and maintain a healthy smile.

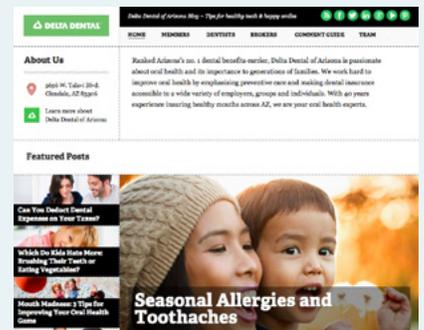
MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: WATERMELON FRUIT PIZZA

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|---|---|--|
| <p>Ingredients:</p> |  | <p>Directions:</p> |
|  | <p>1 watermelon</p> | <p>1. Cut the watermelon into 1½-inch portions resembling a circle like a pizza.</p> |
| <p>4 ounces thawed sugar-free whipped topping</p> |  | <p>2. In a small bowl, stir whipped topping with yogurt until fully combined.</p> |
|  | <p>6 ounces low-sugar peach yogurt</p> | <p>3. Spoon the mixture on top of the watermelon in an even layer.</p> |
| <p>1/3 cup fresh blueberries</p> |  | <p>4. Place the remaining fruit on top of the mixture.</p> |
|  | <p>1/3 cup fresh raspberries</p> | <p>5. Cut into pizza slice-like wedges and enjoy!</p> |
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SOURCES

¹<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/sensitive-teeth>

²<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/fun-teeth-facts>

³<https://www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health/things-you-didnt-know-about-your-teeth#enamel-is-the-hardest-part-of-the-body>

⁴<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ericsavitz/2011/03/22/the-untapped-power-of-smiling/#595b57e47a67>