

## **DIAGNOSING TOOTH DECAY**

We can't possibly cure what we can't see. Tooth decay is often "hidden", and finding the hidden decay before it alters the tooth structure is becoming an increasing problem in modern dentistry. With the widespread use of fluoride found in new and improved toothpastes, mouth rinses, and drinking water, tooth surfaces are becoming harder and more resistant to decay. This makes diagnosing decay even more challenging for your dentist. Tooth decay can start through microscopic openings in the enamel, and with the increased consumption of soft drinks, candy, and fast food, decay has also become an increasing problem. While the enamel or external surface seems healthy with no visible cavities, decay can be spreading beneath the surface. X-Rays and probing instruments, alone, are unreliable in detecting decay beneath the biting surface, especially in the early stages of decay.

**Introducing DIAGNOdent!** This new and unique state-of-the-art instrument is used by Dr. Amie Rockow-Nelson, D.D.S. in our Jewell and Ames offices. DIAGNOdent is a small instrument and a major breakthrough that allows us to scan your teeth, search for "hidden" decay below the enamel, and monitor the surfaces of your teeth. DIAGNOdent is an early source of detection and allows us to either "watch" or monitor a suspicious tooth, or treat the decay below the surface before it spreads and destroys the tooth from within. The use of the DIAGNOdent is simple. A pen-like wand is glided over the surface of the tooth and instant feedback is given on the health of the tooth. It is pain free for the patient, and a great tool for diagnosing early decay before the problem gets out of hand. The cost of treating early decay beneath the tooth surface is much less costly than treatment of a cavity or "hole" which is visible. Decay starts before a cavity is visible. With DIAGNOdent, we are able to locate and treat decay in the early stages allowing us to protect and preserve the tooth structure.

There is no extra cost for the patient when we use DIAGNOdent. In fact, if decay is detected, we may even save you money in the long run, in the treatment of your tooth, while catching it in the early stages. Being able to detect decay before it affects the outer structure of your tooth is a major breakthrough; and Dr. Amie Rockow-Nelson is one of a few dentists in this area who is using DIAGNOdent.