

Fluoride and Tooth Decay

The Cause of Tooth Decay

Tooth decay can result when there is loss of enamel or dentin from your teeth. Loss of these tissues can form a cavity. Three factors must be present for this to happen; bacteria, carbohydrates (sugars and starches), and a susceptible tooth. Bacteria uses the carbohydrates as food to produce an acid that can eat at the surface of the susceptible tooth.

Prevention of Decay

It is important to brush your teeth after meals and snacks to limit the amount of time acid is in contact with the surface of your teeth. Regular flossing will also help to remove any unwanted food or plaque that can cause tooth decay.

Drinking water that contains fluoride, especially while teeth are still developing in the jaw, and professional fluoride treatments during your routine cleaning at the dental office is the best defense against decay.

Benefits of Professional Fluoride Treatments

Tooth decay affects everyone, regardless of age, because the causes are the same. Fluoride treatments can help slow the process of breakdown and speed up the natural remineralization of weakened tooth structure. A tooth that is routinely treated with fluoride is stronger and more resistant to decay. Fluoride helps prevent primary tooth decay in children and also helps prevent secondary decay around existing restorations. Fluoride can also help protect and strengthen exposed root surfaces caused by gum recession and eliminate sensitivity.