

The stages of dental decay - Smile Solutions

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The stages of dental decay From when we are very young, we are told to brush our teeth twice a day , control our sugar intake and floss regularly – otherwise, we will get cavities. But what is a cavity? And is the drill-and-fill method the only way of treating dental caries? Actually tooth decay – or dental caries – is a consequence of bacterial activity on the surfaces of our teeth. Our mouth is home to millions of bacterial species, both “good” and “bad”. A particularly sugary diet feeds the bacteria that produce acid, and this in turn promotes dental caries. Dental decay is caused by several factors, including but not limited to: Repeated intake of sweet sticky foods especially in between mealtimes Inadequate removal of plaque – not brushing or flossing efficiently Decreased defence factors such as inadequate saliva (dry mouth) Old fillings with leaky margins. All of these factors will initiate the process of tooth decay, which occurs in several stages. Stage 1: The initial lesion The earliest form of a cavity arises as a white spot lesion or a brown spot lesion. This is where mineral is removed from the tooth surface at the microscopic level. The tooth still feels hard to touch and often there are no symptoms. The cavity is not yet visible on X-rays. At this stage, early intervention with topical fluoride or specialised products can restore minerals back into the tooth structure and thus prevent the lesion from getting any further. This is termed remineralisation , or arresting of dental caries . Stage 2: Dentine caries If the initial lesion is not reversed, the bacteria continue to tunnel their way through the tooth until they reach the inner dentine layer. The dentine layer of teeth contains a direct link to the nerve of the tooth and now the tooth may become sensitive to cold or sweetness. Sometimes, though, the cavity can present with no symptoms until very late. The cavity would also be visible on X-rays, and clinically may have a shadowy appearance. Unfortunately, once dental caries is in the dentine zone, remineralisation is not possible and a filling will be required. Depending on the size and depth of the cavity, several material options are available for this. Stage 3: Caries involving pulp If left long enough, the cavity can invade the nerve chamber of the tooth – the pulp. When caught quickly enough, we can prevent nerve death by placing a medicament over the pulp and overlying that with a filling. However, if left too late dental caries can cause nerve damage and ultimately death of the nerve and loss of blood supply to the tooth. When this happens, the tooth will need root canal treatment (a filling in the nerve chamber) in order to be restored. While some teeth show symptoms ranging from mild sensitivity to a throbbing, dull ache, a large percentage of teeth will undergo nerve death without any symptoms! In summary, along with good oral hygiene and diet, it is important for us to have regular checkups and up-to-date X-rays . In this way we

are able to catch any cavities in the early stages, where remineralisation is still possible. In this age of minimal-intervention dentistry, prevention of dental caries is a priority. Articles from Dr Maliha Siddiqui View Blogs General Dr Maliha Siddiqui 14 Jan 2021 Night Time Tooth Grinding/Clenching Read More All Dr Maliha Siddiqui 21 Oct 2018 How long do dental fillings last? Read More All Dr Maliha Siddiqui 30 Mar 2017 Do I have to get a chipped tooth fixed? Read More General Dr Maliha Siddiqui 14 Jan 2021 Night Time Tooth Grinding/Clenching Read More All Dr Maliha Siddiqui 21 Oct 2018 How long do dental fillings last? Read More All Dr Maliha Siddiqui 30 Mar 2017 Do I have to get a chipped tooth fixed? Read More General Dr Maliha Siddiqui 14 Jan 2021 Night Time Tooth Grinding/Clenching Read More All Dr Maliha Siddiqui 21 Oct 2018 How long do dental fillings last? Read More All Dr Maliha Siddiqui 30 Mar 2017 Do I have to get a chipped tooth fixed? Read More View Blog Call Us 13 13 96 Location Level 1, 220 Collins Street Manchester Unity Building, Melbourne VIC 3000 Hours Of Service Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 6.00pm Saturday: 8.30am – 1.30pm Sunday: By Appointment Our Services General Dentistry Cosmetic Dentistry Orthodontics Specialist Care Dental Implants Children's Dentistry Emergency Dentistry Why Choose Us Our Team Media Awards Careers Technology Location Holistic Dentistry Quick Links Contact Us Articles Packages & Offers Dental Payment Plans Understanding Your Treatment Sitemap Privacy Policy Copyright © Smile Solutions. All Rights Reserved. This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply. Close Our Services General Dentistry Dental Cleans and Hygienists Wisdom Teeth Emergency Dentistry Root Canal Tooth Fillings Chipped or Cracked Teeth Snoring & Sleep Apnoea TMD & Teeth Grinding Sport Mouthguards Dental Anxiety Cosmetic Dentistry Porcelain Veneers & Crowns Same Day Porcelain Veneers™ Composite Bonding Professional Teeth Whitening CEREC Restorations Invisalign® No Braces All-on-4® Dental Implants Gummy Smile Complimentary Cosmetic Consultation Orthodontics Invisalign No Braces Orthodontic Braces Children's Braces and Invisalign Jaw Surgery Dental Implants All-on-4® Dental Implants Conventional & Immediate Implants Dental Bridges Bone Grafting For Implants Dentures Specialist Care Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons Prosthodontists Orthodontists Periodontists Endodontists Paediatric Dentists Complex Dentistry Children's Dentistry First Visit To The Dentist Children's Dental Emergencies Children's Braces and Invisalign Child Dental Benefit Schedule Kids Teeth Cleaning Tips Why Choose Us Our Team Our Location Technology Awards Holistic Dentistry Before After Gallery Payment Plans Packages & Offers Contact Us Call Us 13 13 96 Close Smile Solutions AI Assistant ■ Hello! I'm here to help you with questions about Smile Solutions. How can I assist you today? Popular questions: What services does Smile Solutions offer? How can I contact Smile Solutions What are your business hours? ■■ × 0 /1000 Contact Us Call Us 13 13 96 Location Level 1, 220 Collins Street Manchester Unity Building, Melbourne VIC 3000 Hours Of Service Monday – Friday: 8.00am – 6.00pm Saturday: 8.30am – 1.30pm Sunday: By Appointment Close Book Now