

Learn about  
teeth and gum  
problems.

# Dental

Dental  
(den-tal)

This paper tells me about my teeth and gums. It shows some problems a person can get with their teeth and gums. It tells what I and my dentist can do to try and keep my teeth healthy. The more I know, the better I can take care of my teeth.

## Simply Health

Simply Health helps me learn more about health care. Simply Health gives me the information I need to talk to my doctors.

## Teeth have 2 main parts

- The part I see is the **crown**.
- The part I cannot see is the **root**.

Teeth are made of **enamel**, **dentin** and **pulp**.

**Enamel** (ee-na-mull) is the hard part of my tooth. Enamel is the hardest stuff in my body.

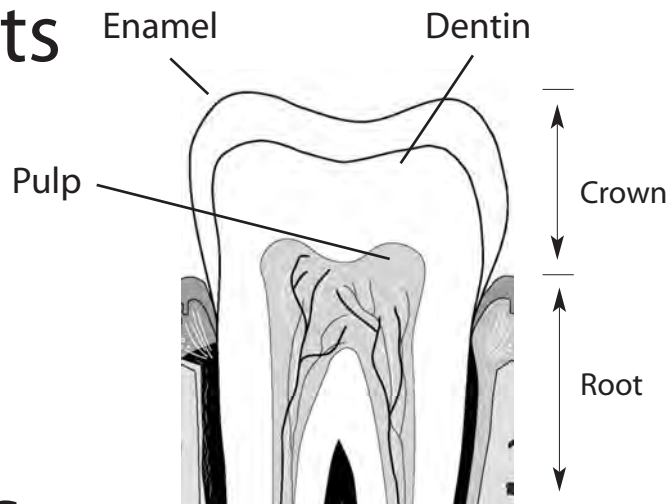
- It covers the part of my teeth that you see.
- It is hard so I can chew food.

**Dentin** is the softer part of my tooth. It is under the enamel.

- Dentin covers the **pulp** in my tooth.

**Pulp** is the **nerve**. It keeps my tooth alive.

- **Pulp** is inside each tooth.
- It tells my brain when my teeth hurt.
- The nerve in my tooth can die.
- It dies from **tooth decay** (dee-kay).



## Gums

**Gums** help hold my teeth in place. They protect the **root** of my tooth.

The root is under the **gums**. I cannot see it.

**Healthy** (hell-thee) **gums** are pale pink.

When my **gums** are not healthy (**hell-thee**), they may be sore, red, puffy, or even bleed.

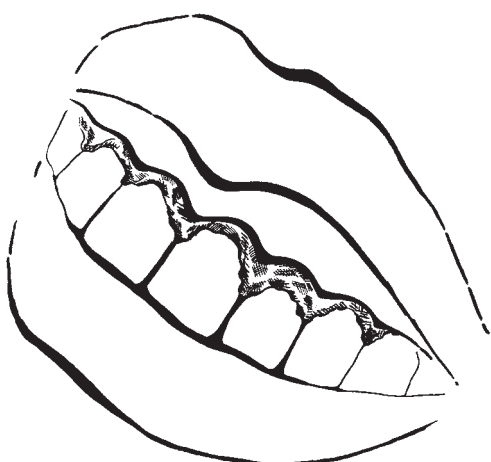
## What gives me teeth and gum problems?

Mostly, it is **plaque** (plak) that gives me a problem, such as a **cavity** (cahv-it-ee).

### What is plaque?

**Plaque** (plak) is sticky stuff. It grows on my teeth near my **gums**.

It is made of germs. The germs eat the **enamel** (ee-na-mull) on my teeth. This is how plaque makes a **cavity**.



### What is a cavity?

**Tooth decay** (dee-kay) happens when **plaque** eats the **enamel** on my tooth. Now there is a hole in my tooth enamel. We call the hole a **cavity**.

A **cavity** can make my tooth hurt all of the time. My dentist will give me a **filling**. This gets rid of the **cavity** or hole.



### What is a filling?

A **filling** is when a dentist takes out all the **tooth decay**. She fills the hole with **tooth cement** (se-ment).

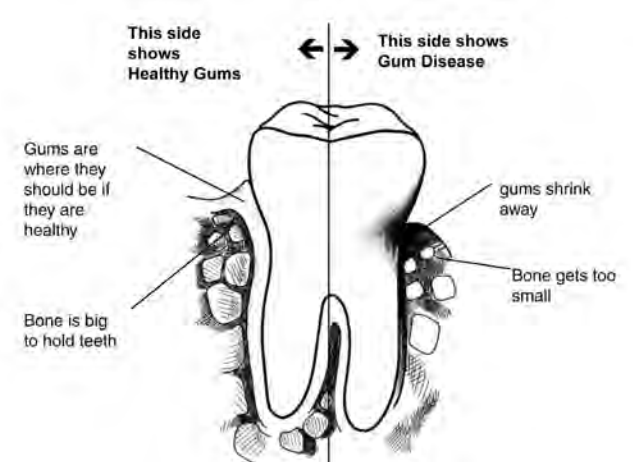
Tooth cement can be silver or white. It can also be the same colour as your tooth.



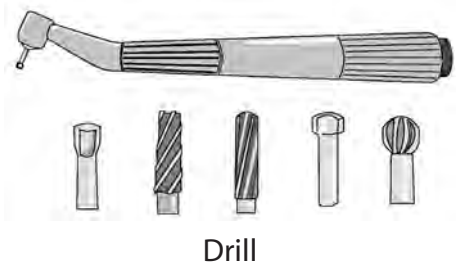
### What is gum disease?

I may have **gum disease** if my **gums** bleed or hurt. I can get **gum disease** if I do not floss my teeth.

With **gum disease**, my **gums** shrink away from my teeth. My teeth will be loose when this happens.



# Here are some tools you might see at your dentist's office



Drill



Scaler (**skay**-ler) tools



X-ray machine (ma-sheen)



Dental chair

## What does my dentist use to fix teeth?

- Fillings
- Crowns
- Root canals
- Bridges
- Braces
- Veneers

## What is a dentist?

A **dentist** is a doctor for my teeth.

## What does a dentist do?

She helps keep my teeth and **gums healthy** (**hell**-thee). She looks in my mouth to see if I have problems. Here are some problems my dentist will look for:

- **cavities**
- **gums** that hurt or bleed
- open sores or bumps
- broken **fillings** or broken teeth.

My dentist helps make sure my teeth do not go bad from these problems. My dentist can do these things:

- give **fillings**
- make **crowns** for broken teeth
- tell me if I need **braces**
- tell me who I can get braces from
- fit me for **dentures**.  
(**den**-chers are teeth I can take out)

## What is a dental hygienist?

A **dental hygienist** (**hi-jen**-ist) works with my dentist. She knows how to help me keep my teeth **healthy** (**hell**-thee).

### What does a dental hygienist do?

A **dental hygienist** does many things. Here are some things she does:

- take **x-rays**
- clean my teeth with tools
- keep tools clean

- teach me how to keep my teeth and gums **healthy** (**hell**-thee)
- teach me how to **brush** and **floss**.

## Who goes to the dentist?

We all do! Even if I have no teeth I must go to the dentist. Why? To make sure my mouth is **healthy** (**hell**-thee).



## Why do I have to take care of my gums and teeth?

To fix problems with my teeth and gums before they start. That way, our teeth do not fall out. To keep **healthy** (**hell**-thee).

- Tooth problems can make me sick.

To have a nice smile.

- If I brush and floss my teeth every day.
- I will have a nice healthy smile.

## How do I take care of my gums and teeth?

Go to my dentist two times a year.

- Why? To find and stop problems early.

Have my dental hygienist (**hi-jen**-ist) clean my teeth at my check-ups.

- Why? Because she can clean my teeth better with her tools.

Brush and floss 2 or 3 times a day.

- Why? To take the **plaque** germs off my teeth.

I may need to go to the dentist more. This is if I get a lot of **cavities** (**cav**-it-eez). Or if I have a lot of **plaque**.

## Healthy foods

These foods can keep my teeth **healthy** (**hell**-thee).

My doctor can tell me what foods are best for me. So can my dentist. They can also tell me what foods I should not eat.



Apple



Carrots



Cheese



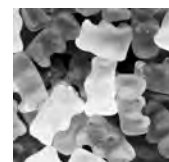
Eggs

## Not healthy foods

Do not eat foods that have a lot of sugar. Why? Because sugar and acid make plaque germs grow. This can give me cavities. When do I have to brush my teeth? If I do eat these foods, I should brush my teeth!



Cake or Pie

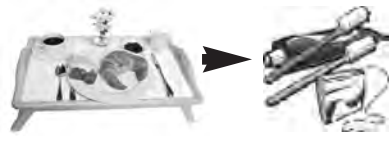


Candy

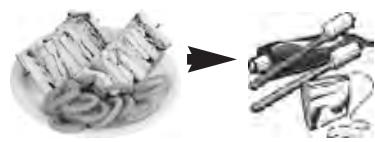


Pop

# When do I brush and floss my teeth?



Breakfast



Lunch



Dinner

## When do I have to brush my teeth?

**I must brush my teeth before bed.**

After I eat in the morning.

And if I can, after lunch.

I try to **brush 2 or 3 times a day.**

Why? To keep food and plaque germs off my teeth. This way I will not get cavities or gum disease. My dentist can show me how to brush my teeth.

## When do I have to floss?

I have to **floss** my teeth 1 time a day.

The best time to floss is **before bed time.**

I floss to take out the **plaque** germs and food between my teeth. Floss can stop **gum disease** and cavities.

**Floss my teeth!**

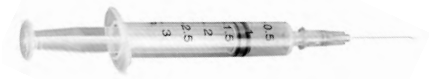
My dentist or **dental hygienist** can show me how to **floss.**

## What if I am afraid to go to the dentist?

My dentist can give me a pill to eat. Or, she can give me a **needle** in my arm. This will make me sleepy.

Then she can work on my teeth. I will not feel it. I will not know what she does.

Someone I trust has to come with me. They can stay with me at my dentist's.



Needle



Pill

# What do I need to know before I see my dentist?



Do I have a health problem, such as a heart problem?

- If so, I may have to take medicine before I see my dentist.
- I must tell my dentist if I have heart problems or other health problems.

On my first visit to a dentist, I must fill out a **form** (a paper with questions).

- The form asks me if I am **allergic** (a-ler-jic) to any drugs.
- **Allergic** means I get sick if I use them.
- It also asks if I have health problems.

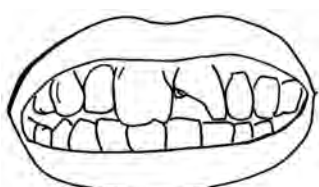
## How many times should I see my dentist?

Two times a year, every year even if I do not have a problem.

### When should I go to the dentist soon?

I should go to a dentist soon if I have these problems:

- I have a broken tooth.
- My **gums** are sore, bleed or feel puffy.
- I have a tooth that hurts.
- I have a sore jaw or mouth.
- I have a lot of headaches (**hed-ayks**).



Broken tooth

## If I go to the dentist, does it mean I have a problem?

No! If I go to the dentist I can stop problems before they start.

## Will the dentist check-up hurt?

It may hurt a little if I have a problem, such as: sore **gums** or teeth.

If it hurts when my dentist checks my teeth, I can tell her.

She can put cream on my teeth and **gums**. That will make them numb (num). Then it will not hurt.



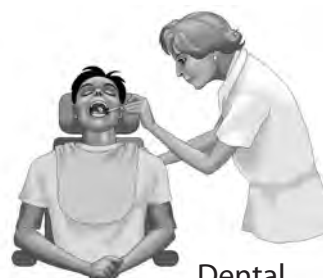
No sore teeth

## Will my teeth hurt if I go to the dentist?

I may need a **filling**. If so, my dentist uses a small drill. She takes away the **tooth decay** in my tooth.

Before she drills, she will give me a **needle** (**nee-dull**). It will go in my **gums**. This will **freeze** them. That way I cannot feel the dentist work.

I will not feel part of my mouth or tongue. I will not feel much for a long time after the needle. I need to take care not to burn or bite my mouth.



Dental checkup

## My teeth or gums may hurt even if they are OK!

My teeth can hurt if I clench them. My **gums** can hurt if I brush too hard. My teeth can hurt with cold or hot things.

My dentist can tell me what is wrong. She can tell me some ways to stop the pain.

## My teeth may not hurt if I have a problem.

No-one feels pain the same way.

I can have a **cavity** (**cahv-it-ee**) and no pain!

This is why I must see my dentist—to take care of small problems before they get big.

# What happens at my dentist check-up?

Sometimes, I get an x-ray. The dental assistant takes it.

An **x-ray** is like a picture (pik-**cher**).

It shows my bone and tooth. It shows **cavities**.

They can be between my teeth.

Or, they can be below my **gums**.

An **x-ray** shows problems that my dentist cannot see with her eyes, such as:

- a hidden **cavity** (**cahv-it-ee**)
- **infection** (in-**fek-shun**)
- **bone disease** (diz-**eez**).



## My dentist checks for problems

My dentist will look for lots of things, such as:

- **cavities**
- **gums** that bleed
- **infection** (in-**fek-shun**)
- **gum disease** (diz-**eez**)
- how my teeth fit together when I chew
- old **fillings** that move
- broken teeth
- the health of my mouth.

I may wear **dentures** (**den-chers**).

If so, my dentist will check to see if they fit.

If I have no cavities or gum problems, my dental hygienist (**hy-jen-ist**) will clean my teeth!

## What happens when my dental hygienist cleans my teeth?

She uses a small mirror.

- She looks at my teeth and gums.
- She looks for any problems.



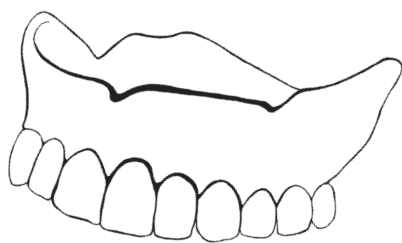
She uses a **scaler** (**skay-ler**).

- This is a metal tool.
- It takes tartar off my teeth. Tartar is hard plaque. I can not brush the tartar away.

The tartar is on the sides of my teeth. Sometimes it is also under my gums.

Then, she puts a paste (**payst**) on a small rubber tool. The paste feels like sand. The tool spins and scrubs my teeth. It works better than a toothbrush. When my teeth are clean, I can rinse my mouth.

Last, she will **floss** my teeth. Floss helps pick plaque and food from between my teeth.



Dentures (**den-chers**)

## What the hard words mean

**Allergic** (a-**ler-jic**): If I am allergic to a drug, I get sick if I use it.

**Bone disease** (diz-**eez**): When my jaw bone gets small.

**Braces** (**bray-says**): Metal wires on my teeth. They move my teeth in a nice row. Now I will bite better.

**Bite**: The way my top and bottom teeth touch each other when I chew.

**Cavity** (**cahv-it-ee**): A cavity is a hole in my tooth **enamel**. It is made by **plaque**.

**Crown**: A crown can be two things:  
1. The crown of my tooth is the top part of my tooth. It is the part I can see.  
2. A crown is also like a **filling**. A crown **filling** covers my whole tooth. The dentist may give me a crown if I break my tooth. Or, if the **cavity** in my tooth is too big to fill.

**Dental hygienist** (hi-**jen-ist**): She cleans my teeth. She went to school to learn about teeth and **gums**. She knows how to help me keep my teeth healthy (**hell-thee**).

**Dentin**: The softer part of my tooth. It is under the **enamel**.

**Dentist**: A doctor for my teeth.

**Dentures** (**den-chers**): These are teeth I can take out. Sometimes we call them false teeth!

**Enamel** (ee-**na-mull**): This is the hard part of my tooth. Enamel is harder than the bones in my body.

**Filling**: This fixes a **cavity**. My dentist takes out the **tooth decay**. Then she fills the hole with tooth cement.

**Form**: A paper with questions. I have to fill a form on my first visit to a dentist.

**Freeze**: When my dentist gives me a **needle** (**nee-dull**). It goes in my **gums**. It makes it so I cannot feel them.

**Gums**: Healthy gums are firm and pink. They help hold my teeth in place.

**Gum disease** (diz-**eez**): When my gums get **infected** (see **infection**). This makes them start to fall away from my teeth.

**Healthy** (**hell-thee**): When you are not sick (sik).

**Infection** (in-**fek-shun**): When germs make part of your body swell up. The part fills with puss or fluid.

**Nerve**: The nerve in my tooth is the same as pulp. It makes me feel pain in my tooth.

**Plaque** (**plak**): Sticky germs that grow on my teeth. It grows on my teeth near my **gums**.

**Pulp**: This is the nerve in my tooth. It keeps my tooth alive.

**Root**: This is the part of my tooth that I cannot see. It is under my gums. It holds the pulp. The root helps hold my teeth in my jaw bone.

**Root canal**: This is what my dentist gives me when the pulp of my tooth dies. She will take it out the pulp before it becomes **infected**.

**Scaler** (**skay-ler**): A metal tool that the dental hygienist uses. It takes the tartar off my teeth.

**Tartar**: Is hard plaque. I cannot brush tartar away.

**Tooth cement** (se-**ment**): My dentist uses this to fill **cavities**. Tooth cement can be silver or white.

**Tooth decay** (dee-**kay**): This is when plaque eats the enamel on my tooth. It makes a hole in my tooth enamel. The hole is called a **cavity**.

**X-ray**: A black and white picture of the inside of my tooth. An x-ray shows the teeth and bone in my mouth. An x-ray shows if I have cavities between my teeth.



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