

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.

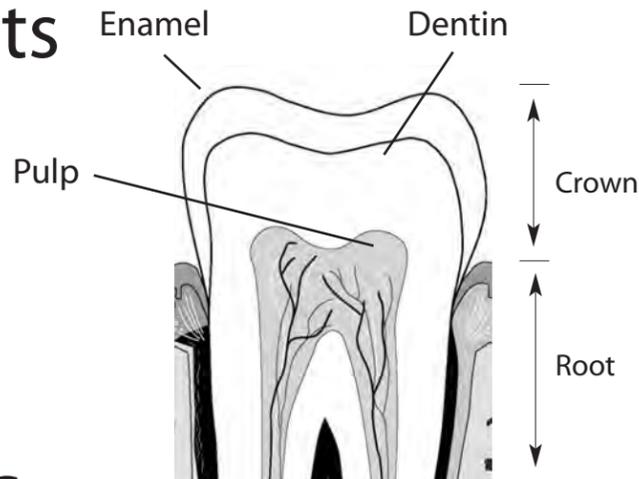
- It covers the part of my teeth that you see.
- It is hard so I can chew food.

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.

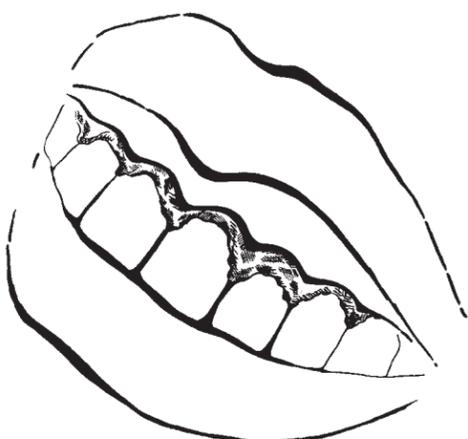
What gives me teeth and gum problems?

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**.

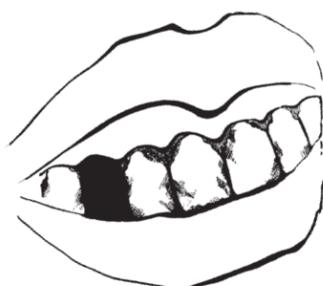
It is made of germs. The germs eat the **enamel** (ee-na-mull) on my teeth. This is how plaque makes a **cavity**.



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).

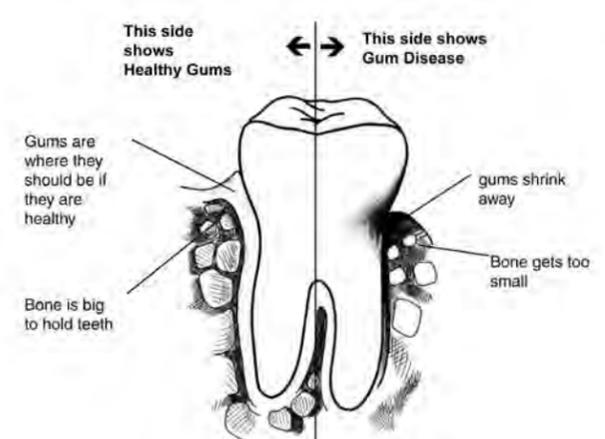
Tooth cement can be silver or white. It can also be the same colour as your tooth.



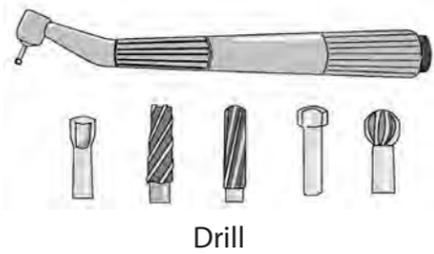
What is gum disease?

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



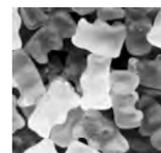
Eggs

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

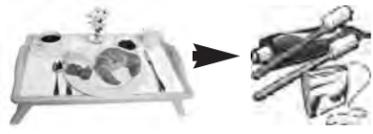


Candy

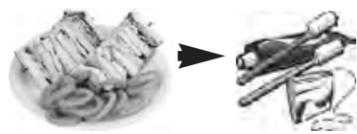


Pop

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?

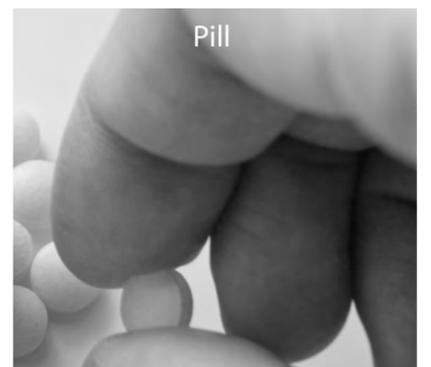
My dentist can give me a pill to eat. Or, she can give me a **needle** in my arm. This will make me sleepy.

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.



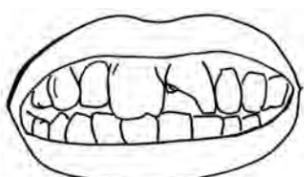
How many times should I see my dentist?

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

When should I to 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.



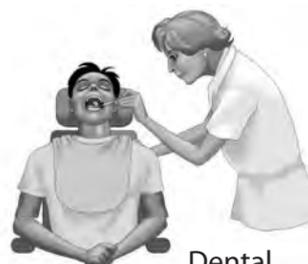
No sore teeth

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.



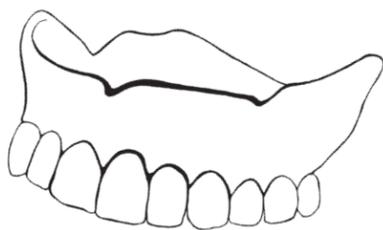
She uses a **scaler** (**skay-ler**).

- 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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