Tooth decay is a serious disease!

- Starts on the surface of the teeth and continues to get worse
- Can cause permanent damage in as little as 6 months
- Can cause sensitivity
- Ultimately may mean drilling, fillings and crowns

What causes tooth decay?

- Not flossing and brushing every day at home
- “Dry mouth” from medicines that reduce saliva flow
- Foods with too much sugar
- Fillings that you already have can wear away
- Braces, retainers and bridges you already have can attract bacteria that causes decay
- Putting infants to bed with drinks containing sugar
- Moms can pass on the bacteria that causes decay to their kids
- Using any form of tobacco

Stage One Disease: Pre-Cavities

- Your tooth loses minerals on the outer surface
- This is usually invisible to the naked eye
- Areas where teeth touch are really vulnerable

Stage Two Disease: White Spots

- These are the first visible signs
- They appear near your gum line or near your braces
- Think of them as “hot spots”

Stage Three Disease: Cavities

Regular Cavities

- Part of the healthy tooth is destroyed
- Has to be cleared of decay and filled
- If decay gets too deep, the tooth and root have to be removed and you’ll need a crown, bridge or implant

Root Cavities

- Start on the tooth surface near the gums
- Faster growing than regular cavities
- More common in adults
- Can make teeth sensitive and painful when eating or drinking cold or hot beverages

Secondary Cavities

- Over time, older fillings can crack or chip
- Plaque and bacteria get under them and cause new decay
- Need to be refilled or replaced with a crown, bridge or implant

Fight tooth decay with proper care.

- Avoid drilling, filling and tooth loss with early detection
- Learn to remove plaque by brushing properly without damaging enamel
- Your dental professional may recommend using:
  - A power toothbrush
  - A special toothpaste
  - A special oral rinse
- Floss every day to remove plaque between your teeth
- Don’t miss appointments with your dental professional

You may also need stronger medicines or more frequent visits to the dental office.

- High-strength fluoride varnishes, gels or rinses applied during your dental office visit can help, even for adults
- Prescription fluoride toothpaste or rinse may need to be used between visits
- Prescription sensitivity toothpaste can be helpful for people with root cavities
- More office visits may be needed to remove plaque and tartar build-up that you are missing at home

1. Diagnosis and Management of Dental Caries Throughout Life.
Avoid drilling, filling and loss with early detection.

Dental professionals can spot early signs of problems and recommend home care treatments.

- Pre-cavities
- Regular Cavities
- Secondary Cavities
- White Spot Cavities
- Root Cavities