

How to prevent dental erosion?

- Reduce the frequency and quantity of acidic beverages consumed.
- Don't swish acidic drinks around or hold them in your mouth, and avoid sipping them.
- Drink acidic drinks quickly: use a straw to avoid bringing the acid into contact with the tooth surface. Rinse your mouth with water directly afterward.
- Drink acidic beverages at the end of a meal when saliva production is high. Saliva helps to neutralize the acidity, restores the mouth's natural balance and gradually remineralizes the enamel, albeit very slowly. If the enamel is subjected to several "acid attacks" in a day, it cannot fully remineralize and erosion will progress.
- Choose tap water over acidic drinks, beverages, juices or flavoured waters.
- Avoid eating acidic foods before bedtime, since saliva production decreases during sleep, thus hindering its ability to neutralize all the acid.
- Eat acidic foods less often and reduce the duration of their contact with teeth.
- Choose fresh citrus fruits over citrus juices, since chewing stimulates saliva production.
- Avoid sucking citrus fruits.
- Avoid brushing your teeth immediately prior to or following an "acid attack" in order to enable the saliva to protect the tooth enamel. Brushing immediately before can rob the enamel of this protection, while brushing immediately after is also not advised, since the friction of the brushing action makes the softened enamel vulnerable to wear.

The following solutions can help reduce acidity:

- Drink milk;
- Eat cheese or plain yogurt;
- Rinse your mouth with water;
- Stimulate the production of saliva by chewing sugar-free gum.
- Brush your teeth two to four times a day using a soft bristle brush and a non-abrasive fluoride toothpaste and floss daily.
- Consult your dental hygienist at least once or twice a year to check for signs of erosion and limit the irreversible damage it can have on your tooth enamel.



Ask your dental hygienist for advice. Dental hygienists are health professionals who play a key role in educating the public, promoting the development, monitoring and maintenance of good oral hygiene.

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Adverse Effects

of Energy Drinks
on Your Oral Health



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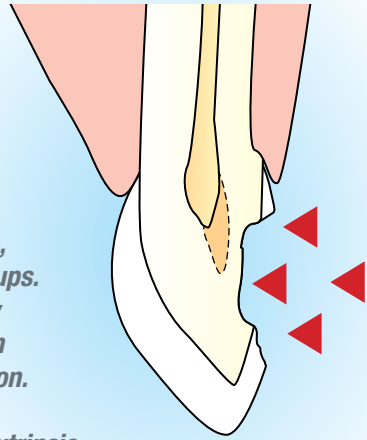
“Dental erosion is a multifactorial process leading to the loss of enamel and dentine, involving acid dissolution which is not related to the presence of bacteria, and may affect all age groups. It is becoming increasingly significant in the long-term management of the dentition.

“Sources of acid may be extrinsic (predominantly dietary) or intrinsic (predominantly gastric).”

Source: FDI World Dental Federation

Dental erosion has been on the rise for some years in industrialized nations, particularly among adolescents. The phenomenon, which is liable to affect all age groups, is a concern for health authorities like the World Health Organization (WHO) and dental professional organizations, including the *Ordre des hygiénistes dentaires du Québec*, since prevention is at the core of the dental hygienist’s priorities.

Numerous studies around the world have shown that, due to its irreversible nature, dental erosion can become a more worrisome problem than dental caries.



Eating habits have changed a great deal. Too often, acidic beverages, particularly energy, soft and sports drinks, are replacing milk or tap water. Young people are big consumers of these drinks, which “eat away tooth enamel”, and unfortunately their enamel is more fragile since it is less mature. This puts them at a higher risk of dental erosion.

What is dental erosion?

Dental erosion results directly from contact with acid, either alimentary or gastric. Erosion is irreversible and causes permanent damage to the structure of the tooth enamel. The enamel’s surface quickly softens, making it more vulnerable to wear—for instance, through brushing or chewing.

Consequences of dental erosion

- Significant impairment of enamel hardness
- Demineralization of tooth enamel, making it more vulnerable to impact
- Weakening of tooth enamel, making it more vulnerable to wear
- Hypersensitivity to cold, heat, sugar or touch
- Difficulty of restoration due to dissolution of the enamel’s internal structure
- Possible need for root canal treatment if the erosion nears the pulp (nerve)



Causes of dental erosion

- Foods: Acidic foods and beverages
- Internal: Gastric reflux or vomiting (eating disorder, alcoholism, pregnancy, etc.). The stomach contents are highly acidic.

Which foods or beverages are acidic?

- Soft drinks (either sweetened or sugar-free), sports, energy or smart drinks
- Naturally or artificially flavoured water: some brands contain 5 to 20 teaspoons of sugar per litre
- Fruit juice, vegetable juice, beer, cider, wine, tea and coffee
- Acidic fruits: oranges, grapefruits, lemons, strawberries, apples, tomatoes, etc.
- Acidic vegetables: rhubarb, marinated vegetables (beets, pickles, etc.)
- Salad dressings and other foods containing vinegar (ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, relish, etc.)
- Sour, tangy candies
- Etc.



Signs of dental erosion



- The tooth becomes dull.
- Smooth surfaces lose their sheen.
- The eroded enamel stains more quickly.



- Grooves form in the enamel.
- The incisal edge becomes thinner, appears translucent and chips more easily.



- Rounded surfaces flatten.
- Restorations appear raised.



- The yellowish dentine is visible beneath the eroded enamel.

