

266 Main Street North Markham, Ontario
Serving the Markham Community Since 1987

(905) 294 9905

The Diseases That Can Affect Your Dental Health



**FOCUS
ON...
YOUR
DENTAL
HEALTH**

There are several dental diseases that occur; however the two most frequent ones are gum disease and cavities also known as periodontal disease and caries respectively.

Dental Caries (cavities)

Dental caries can be defined as an infection of the tooth. Although some believe cavities occur from sugar products eating away at your teeth, it is actually more complicated than this. As we chew our food, the food mixes with the normal bacteria in our mouth and sticks to our teeth. This mixture of food and bacteria is what we call plaque.

Plaque can be removed by regular brushing and flossing, however if plaque is allowed to stay on teeth for longer than a few days it calcifies and hardens and becomes tartar or dental calculus which can only be scraped off during dental cleanings. As the plaque/calculus stick to the teeth, the bacteria within it begins to digest the food material and produce an acidic waste product. It is this acid that begins to dissolve the tooth and create what we call a cavity. If left alone a cavity will keep on increasing in size until it infects the nerve and blood vessels of the tooth and produce a dental abscess which can be very painful.

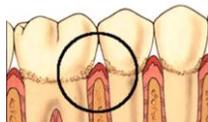


Periodontal Disease (gum disease)

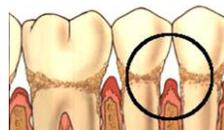
Periodontal disease, much like dental caries, is caused by dental plaque. As the plaque or calculus sticks to the teeth, it aggravates the gum tissue, much like a popcorn kernel stuck between your teeth would. If not cleaned, the plaque causes the gum tissue to become inflamed. This is called gingivitis. If gingivitis persists, eventually the surrounding bone of the tooth begins to break down; this is called periodontal disease. Over time, as the bone around the tooth decreases, the teeth become looser and looser eventually needing to be extracted



Healthy Teeth & Gum Tissue



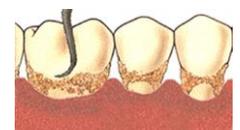
Build up of Plaque along gumline



Gum Tissue beginning to recede



Bone Levels around teeth diminishing



Dental Calculus needs to be professionally removed

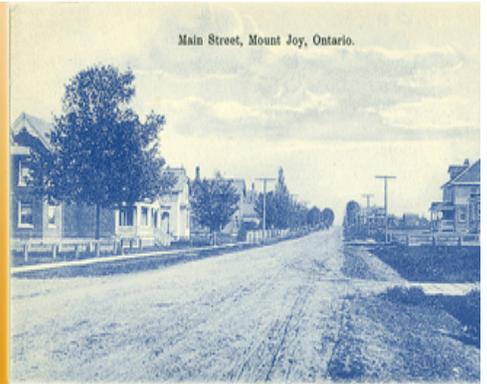
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Bruxism (clenching and grinding of the teeth)

Bruxism is the term used to describe the condition of grinding or clenching one's teeth. It affects about one quarter of the population and can be very destructive to a person's dental health. As one sleeps at night the protective reflexes of their jaws (i.e. those that stop you from biting too forcefully on hard food) are at rest. During this period one can grind their teeth together with incredible amounts of force, much more than regular chewing. This excessive force tends to wear down the teeth.

At first, one sees a flattening of their canine or eyeteeth, however, with time the molars begin to wear down too. This excessive pressure on the teeth causes a host of dental problems such as periodontal disease, sensitive teeth, jaw joint problems etc.

The best therapy to date is the use of nightguard. A nightguard is made by your dentist and is worn while you are asleep. It is similar to a sports guard that athletes wear and it allows you to grind down the nightguard instead of your teeth. If you would like more information about bruxism or to find out if you have a bruxism problem, visit your dentist.

Systemic (bodily) diseases that affect our dental health

We once thought of teeth as being separate from the body, but we are realizing more and more the diseases that affect our body also affect our oral health and vice versa. Earlier in this article we discussed how cavities and gum disease are essentially a low-grade infection of the mouth. Thus diseases that decrease one's immune response also make them more susceptible to dental caries and periodontal disease.

There have been studies that show people with diabetes are at an increased risk for periodontal disease. Cancer survivors that have had radiation treatment to the head and neck need to be aware of their increase risk for oral health problems in part due to their ill-functioning salivary glands. Persons who are immuno-compromised are at an increased risk for cavities and gum disease.



We offer Multiple Sedation Options