

Cracking up

If you suffer from sensitivity to cold or sweet foods and drinks in the absence of tooth decay, or a short, sharp pain on biting, you could have a cracked tooth.

Cracked teeth can be caused by many things such as; chewing or biting on something hard, for example, ice, boiled sweets, meat bones, or seeds in crusty granary-type bread. They can also be caused by having large fillings that may weaken a tooth or by physical trauma such as a blow to the mouth or lower jaw.

However, increasingly, we are seeing cracked teeth due to tooth grinding or clenching habits most commonly associated with stress.

Cracked teeth are often difficult to diagnose because early cracks don't often show up on a visual examination or dental x-ray. Established cracks may be easier to spot as the pain may be well-located and the crack visible on examination.

How we treat a cracked tooth will depend on the direction and severity of the crack. If the crack is small enough, it may be removed by replacing the filling. Bonded white fillings can hold the tooth together making it less likely to crack. Sometimes the cracked part of the tooth fractures off during the removal of the filling and this can be replaced with a new filling.

Your dentist may first place an orthodontic band around the tooth to keep it together. If the pain settles, the band is replaced with a filling that covers the fractured portion of tooth (or the whole biting surface). Other options include the placement of gold or porcelain fillings or a crown.

The nerve may sometimes be affected so badly that it dies. Root canal treatment will be required if the tooth is to be saved.

If the crack goes too far vertically, there is a possibility the tooth may need to be removed and replaced with an artificial one by placing an implant, bridge or removable denture.

There may be occasions when a misaligned bite (malocclusion) can cause undue pressure on your teeth when chewing. In these cases, correcting the bite with a course of orthodontic treatment would prevent further cracking and tooth fractures.

Early diagnosis and prevention are key so please contact us quickly if you have any recurrent sensitivity or pain on biting. A custom-made splint can protect your teeth and prevent further damage as can avoiding hard foods as much as possible.

Finally, a little housekeeping

Do remember that the products we recommend as part of your homecare routine are available at the practice. We carry a full range of Tepe brushes, which are not always available on the high street. So if you run out of the products recommended by us, you can always restock here, rather than purchase a less appropriate one during your weekly shop.

We would also like to take this opportunity to please remind older patients who require assistance and parents of our younger patients that carers must remain in the practice for the duration of their visit. It is necessary that an adult is present who can give informed consent on behalf of a patient who is unable to do so, and to assist in matters of a practical nature in order that guidelines on safeguarding are followed.



We also have a portable ramp to facilitate wheelchair access from the street, so please let us know in advance if it would be helpful, and we can have it ready for you at the time of your appointment.

We hope you've found this newsletter interesting. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions on any of the topics mentioned.

Until next time,
Keep smiling!

David & Naseema



Edited in association with the
British Dental Health Foundation

Articles contained within this newsletter are provided for information only and should not be taken as a recommendation for any specific dental treatment or procedure. For further advice contact the dental practice.

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DENTAL CARE

Smile Update

Welcome to our latest newsletter

It's been a busy summer for us here. David has attended courses on advanced composite bonding, and with Dev has attended a course on snoring and appliance therapy. David and George will also be attending a course on splint therapy – this is particularly relevant to this newsletter.

Naseema has been attending an extended course at the Eastman Hospital on Periodontology (gum disease

diagnosis and treatment) which has come in very handy during Ali's maternity cover! Some of you will have already met Nikki who is covering Mondays and Wednesdays until Ali returns, while Naseema has been covering Thursdays.

In this edition, you will find articles on hidden sugars, orthodontic treatment (braces) and broken teeth. Also, for our male readers, results of a survey on the 10 things women most judge men on.

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