



Exclusively for Dental Health Services Enrollees

TOOTH TIPS!

Understanding Tooth Sensitivity:

Causes, Treatments, and When to See Your Dentist

Tooth sensitivity is a common dental concern that can cause discomfort when eating or drinking hot, cold, sweet, or acidic foods. It occurs when the protective layers of the teeth wear down, exposing the underlying dentin and nerve endings.

Common Causes of Tooth Sensitivity

1. *Enamel Erosion* – Acidic foods, frequent consumption of soda, and aggressive brushing can wear away enamel.
2. *Gum Recession* – As gums recede, the tooth roots become exposed, leading to sensitivity.
3. *Tooth Decay & Cavities* – Damaged teeth can expose nerve endings, increasing sensitivity.
4. *Cracked or Chipped Teeth* – Fractures in teeth can allow extreme temperatures and bacteria to reach the nerves.
5. *Teeth Grinding* – Grinding can wear down enamel over time, leading to sensitivity.
6. *Whitening Products & Harsh Toothpaste* – Some whitening treatments and abrasive toothpaste can irritate teeth.



“Tooth sensitivity occurs when dentin is exposed, causing discomfort with hot, cold, sweet, or acidic foods.”

-American Dental Association (ADA)

Treatment & Prevention

- *Use Desensitizing Toothpaste* – These help block pain signals from reaching nerves.
- *Switch to a Soft-Bristle Brush* – Gentle brushing reduces further enamel damage and gum recession.
- *Fluoride Treatments* – Strengthens enamel and reduces sensitivity.
- *Avoid Acidic Foods & Beverages* – Cut back on citrus, soda, and sugary snacks.
- *Wear a Mouthguard* – If you grind your teeth, a guard can prevent further enamel loss.

When to See Your Dentist

While mild sensitivity can often be managed at home, a dentist should be consulted if:

- Sensitivity persists for more than a few weeks.
- Pain is severe or sharp.
- You notice visible damage to your teeth.
- You experience gum recession or bleeding.

Why Should You Care?

A dentist can identify underlying issues and recommend professional treatments such as bonding, sealants, or even gum grafting for severe cases. Addressing tooth sensitivity early can prevent more serious dental problems in the future.

If you're experiencing persistent discomfort, schedule a dental check-up to keep your smile healthy and pain-free!

*Source: American Dental Association, 2025

For more information visit www.ada.org/resources