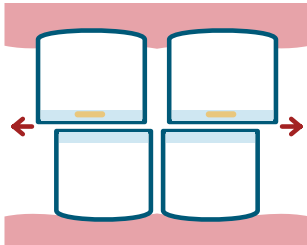


TOOTH WEAR

Which kind of wear do you have?

Enamel never grows back, and it wears away in different ways. Each one leaves its own marks, and each one needs a different fix. Most people have a mix.



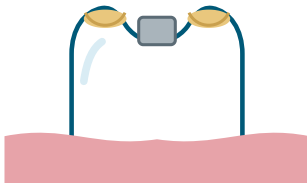
flat edges match

ATTRITION**Grinding and clenching**

Tooth against tooth, at night or during the day.

Look for: flat, shiny edges that line up when you slide your teeth together. Front teeth getting shorter.

What helps: noticing daytime clenching, and a night guard or orthotic if you need one.



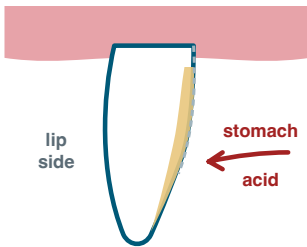
cups, filling stands up

EROSION**Acid from drinks and food**

No bacteria needed. Acid softens the surface, so anything that rubs it wears it faster, even your tongue.

Look for: smooth, glassy, rounded surfaces. Little cups on the back teeth. Fillings that stand taller than the tooth around them.

What helps: keeping acidic drinks with meals, and not sipping, swishing or holding them. Ask us about an anti-erosion toothpaste.



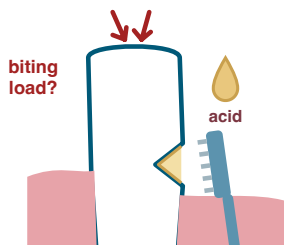
tongue side thinned

EROSION FROM THE STOMACH**Reflux or vomiting**

Stomach acid is far stronger than anything you drink. Reflux can be silent, with no heartburn at all.

Look for: smooth, thinned inner surfaces of the upper front teeth, the side you can't see. We can.

What helps: seeing your physician about reflux. Then we protect what's left.



usually several causes

ABRASION AND ABFRACTION**Notches at the gum line**

A hard brush or gritty paste wears the softer root, and acid softens it first. Heavy biting may add to it, though experts still debate how much.

Look for: a groove or notch where the tooth meets the gum, often sensitive to cold. Its shape alone can't tell the causes apart.

What helps: a soft brush, a light grip and a low-abrasion paste. Sometimes a filling to protect it.

Wear can be stopped, but it doesn't grow back.

Wear is a record of the past, so an exam also tells us whether it's still happening. Finding the cause comes before any repair, or the repair wears the same way.

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Mon & Tue 7-12, 1-5 · Wed 7-12, 1-3 · Thu 7-12, 1-4

Sources: Wetselaar 2020 (Tooth Wear Evaluation System 2.0); Lussi & Jaeggi 2008; Shellis & Addy 2014, 2025; Moazzez 2005; Seong 2017 (tongue on softened enamel); Bartlett 2013; O'Toole 2017; Jongsar 2015. Drawings are simplified to show the patterns, not any one person's teeth. General information, not a substitute for an exam.



Tooth wear article