SANDQUIST DENTISTRY

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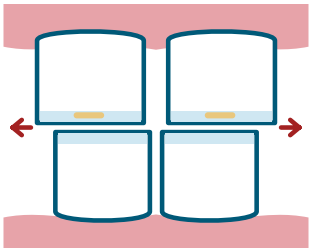
TOOTH WEAR

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

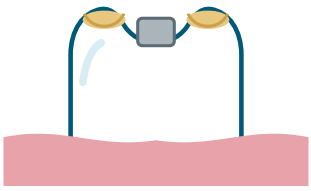
ATTRITION

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

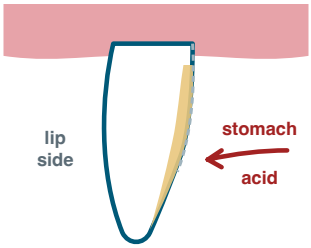
EROSION

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

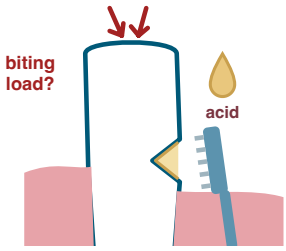
EROSION FROM THE STOMACH

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.

Questions? 702-734-0776 · 2650 Lake Sahara Dr., #160, Las Vegas, NV 89117
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; Jonsgar 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