



“ IS TOOTH SENSITIVITY HOLDING YOU BACK FROM ENJOYING THAT BOWL OF ICE KACANG OR FROZEN YOGHURT? ”



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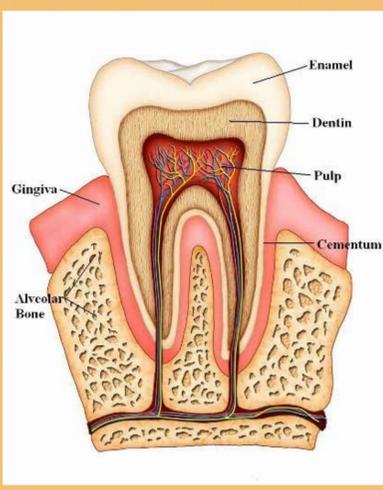
WELL, YOU ARE NOT ALONE!



Studies have shown that **more than 50% of adults in Singapore** have experienced sensitivity. Sensitivity is a condition where a **short, sharp pain** is experienced in the teeth when exposed to **cold, hot, sweet, or acidic foods**, or sometimes even while **brushing**.

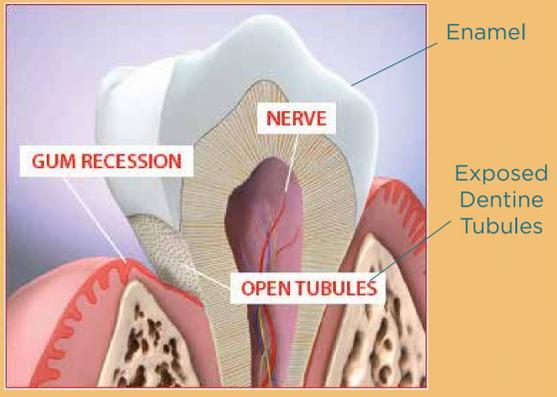
WHY DOES A TOOTH BECOME SENSITIVE?

A tooth becomes sensitive when it **loses its protective outer covering**, namely the **enamel or cementum**. When that happens, tiny hollow tubes in the dentine allow hot, cold, sweet or acidic foods to stimulate the nerves deep within the tooth.



Healthy tooth

Image Source : www.egloos.com



Sensitive tooth due to exposed dentine tubules

Image Source : www.colgateprofessional.com.au

THE MOST COMMON CAUSES OF SENSITIVITY



Aggressive tooth brushing using a hard bristled brush. This causes the gum line to recede, exposing the root and leading to sensitivity.



Tooth decay occurs when acids produced by bacteria break down the outer enamel layer, resulting in a hole in the tooth which exposes the dentine and leads to sensitivity.



Gum disease. When oral hygiene is poor, plaque and tartar build up on the teeth surfaces. Over time, the gums become inflamed and shrink (recede) from the tooth. This causes the roots and dentine to be exposed and become sensitive.



Overconsumption of acidic foods. Frequent and prolonged exposure of enamel to acidic foods (eg carbonated drinks, sports drinks, fruit juices, citrus fruits and wine) causes the enamel to be eroded. The underlying dentine is exposed which leads to sensitivity.



Cracked teeth. Cracks can form on teeth surfaces from trauma, biting on hard foods (eg nuts and crab shells), or from night grinding. These cracks may sometimes be very tiny and not easily noticeable, but they may lead down to the dentine and cause sensitivity.



Recent dental treatment. Teeth sometimes may feel sensitive after a cleaning or filling. This is common and will often resolve on its own after a few weeks. If the sensitivity is severe or persists longer than usual, consult your dentist again.

HOW CAN I MAKE THE SENSITIVITY GO AWAY?

To treat sensitivity, you first need to find out what is causing it. As there are so many causes of sensitivity, **consulting your dentist** would be the best way to nail down the root cause. Depending on your condition, your dentist may advise treatments ranging from desensitizing toothpastes and varnishes, to fillings and crowns, or even root canal treatment.

HOW CAN I PREVENT MY TEETH FROM BECOMING SENSITIVE?

Sensitive teeth does not naturally come with age! Practise these tips to help you keep sensitivity at bay.

1. MAINTAIN GOOD ORAL HYGIENE

Use a soft bristled toothbrush and avoid scrubbing at the gums vigorously. Instead, brush gently in a circular motion along the gum line. Floss once a day.

2. CUT DOWN ON ACIDIC FOODS AND DRINKS

Using a straw when drinking acidic drinks helps to lessen the contact between the drink and your enamel. Rinsing with water after acidic foods also helps protect the enamel.

3. AVOID HARD FOODS

Avoid hard foods as these may cause cracks on your teeth.

4. WEAR NIGHTGUARD

Wear a nightguard if you grind your teeth at night. Your dentist can help you to customize one.

5. VISIT YOUR DENTIST EVERY 6 MONTHS FOR REGULAR CHECK UPS

Your dentist would be able to detect early signs of any problems and treat them before they develop into more serious (and painful!) issues.



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