

fromthedentist

TOOTH EROSION *Other reasons for loss of tooth structure*



The tough, white surface of teeth, called tooth enamel, is the hardest surface in the human body. Through every day processes, like eating and drinking, this ultra hard surface can become eroded by naturally occurring dietary acids.

Our last newsletter discussed tooth erosion that is not caused by tooth decay, but by attacks with acids in foods and beverages. This month we are going to discuss another cause of tooth enamel erosion- **INTRINSIC EROSION**.

There are a few varied reasons that we can get a gradual erosion of the enamel on our teeth other than trauma or decay. The **EXTRINSIC EROSION** we showed last month was caused by acids from various sources. There are also some potential problems with acid that comes from within ourselves. Stomach acids can come in contact with our teeth under some conditions.

Disorders like gastroesophageal reflux (acid reflux) also known as GERD, and vomiting expose teeth to powerful stomach acids that decalcify even the hardest enamel.



This exposes the softer, darker layer of the tooth known as dentin. When acid reflux, or an eating disorder like bulimia, continually exposes teeth to powerful acids, the results become chronic. Teeth can become translucent, pitted, cracked and discolored.

Patients can experience extreme tooth sensitivity and softened teeth become more susceptible to decay. Depending on the degree of damage, several corrective options are available.

Another common type of tooth loss is caused by **GRINDING** of your teeth. Most people will have times when they put their teeth together and squeeze or rub. If this is done occasionally, it is usually not a problem. **However**- there are many



instances when this becomes a habit that the patient isn't even aware of. It is quite common to do this while sleeping. This type of habit can damage some or all of the teeth. It can also lead to changes in your bite, or symptoms of sore jaw muscles or joints. It is also a leading cause of fracturing of teeth. None of this damage is occurring while eating, but during times when there is nothing in your mouth! This can cause several problems that can range from simple to sometimes extensive rehabilitation. Like everything in dentistry, it is always easier to catch these problems early and try to prevent the damage. We can offer several options for treatment of the damage done by grinding, but prevention is still the best choice.

Seasonal Tooth Tips

- Go for brushes with soft nylon bristles.
- Replace your brush about every three months.
- Use a mouthguard if you play contact sports.
 - Floss every day.
 - See your dentist regularly!

Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!

DENTAL MISSION TRIP

Gambia, Africa

Erin Guttormson- one of the dedicated people here at *Souris Valley Dental* recently made a dental mission trip to Africa. Erin traveled with a group of dental mission workers to the village of Bwiam, Gambia to provide dental care to children and young adults in a "rustic" clinic setting. The group is called "A Hand in Health". Erin and her group spent two weeks working in difficult conditions to serve the people of the area. Erin is applying to dental schools at this time, and will continue her service to all of you in the meantime. Thanks Erin for sharing your experiences with all of us.



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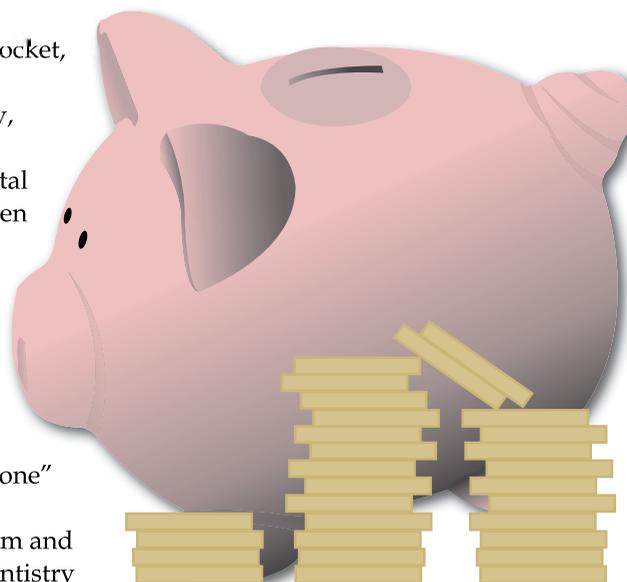
Is There A Hole In Your Pocket?

If you had a hole in your pocket, you'd want to fix it before you lost your wallet or your money, right? Surprisingly, however, many of our patients with dental insurance "lose" hundreds (even thousands) of dollars a year because they fail to use or maximize their insurance or flex benefits before year's end. Once these benefits are gone, they are lost forever... they don't apply to the next year. These are benefits "someone" has paid for.

So if you are due for an exam and cleaning or need additional dentistry done, please give us a call before the end of the year to schedule an appointment.

Sew up that hole in your pocket now, before it's too late!

Your friends at *Souris Valley Dental*.



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