

# PEASHOLM

DENTAL PRACTICE

## TOOTH WEAR

TOOTHWEAR IS THE LOSS OF TOOTH STRUCTURE CAUSED BY FACTORS OTHER THAN TOOTH DECAY FROM SUGAR CONSUMPTION  
THIS INCLUDES EROSION, ATTRITION AND ABRASION.

### *Erosion*

Tooth Erosion is the loss of tooth structure caused by dietary or other acids in the mouth.

It is the progressive loss of tooth substance by chemical dissolution and does not involve bacteria.

Erosion is also a problem in people who suffer from bulimia or morning sickness during pregnancy due to the reflux of gastric juices into the mouth.



### *Signs of Erosion*

Saucer shaped worn areas.

Teeth look thinner and more transparent.

Teeth will feel glassy.

Teeth become increasingly sensitive to cold.

### *Risk Factors for Erosion*

Citrus fruit eaten more than x2 per day.

History of vomiting.

Soft drinks consumed daily.

High levels of alcohol consumption.

Low un-stimulated salivary flow.

Sports drink consumed weekly.



### *Prevention*

Ask your dentist or hygienist to do a diet analysis for you to identify acidic food & drinks.

- Reduce frequency of acidic beverages, drink them cold and use a straw so that the drink has less contact with your teeth.
- Chew sugar free gum.
- Avoid brushing immediately after exposure. Wait at least half an hour for the enamel to become firm and remineralise.
- After vomiting use a mouthwash to freshen your mouth – do not brush.
- Use fluoride toothpaste and spit rather than rinse out to allow fluoride to stay in contact with your teeth longer.
- Use an alcohol free fluoride mouthwash
- Don't hold drinks in your mouth and avoid acid intake at night.

Your dentist may apply a fluoride varnish or gel.

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## pH Content of Food and Drink



The lower the pH, the more acidic and therefore the more harmful it is to your teeth. Water and Milk are the best for your teeth and drinks like fruit juice, fizzy pops and ciders are very erosive. Herbal fruit teas are also very acidic, as are flavoured sparkling waters!! Sports energy drinks tend to be the most acidic drinks of all and should not be consumed on a frequent basis.

## Attrition

This is the wearing down of the enamel edges due to grinding the teeth.

This can be due to habit or stress and happens especially during sleep

Mouth splints/guards can be worn to protect the enamel and discourage this habit.

Teeth can be protected with tooth coloured fillings.

Use an alcohol free fluoride mouthwash to help strengthen your teeth and reduce further wear



## Abrasion

Abrasion is the loss of tooth structure as a result of another factor other than acid, sugar, or tooth contact. For example abrasion may result from scrubbing teeth too hard with a manual toothbrush. It may also result from chewing your nails or using your teeth to hold pins/nails/grips etc.

Gum recession as well as abrasion can also be caused by the same factors. If the gum shrinks away, the area of the tooth it previously covered becomes exposed in the mouth and is much more vulnerable to abrasion.



## Prevention

- Have your tooth brushing technique modified to prevent recession or use an electric toothbrush.
- Use a medium textured toothbrush
- DO not use abrasive toothpastes like smokers toothpastes
- Improve your 'gum' health!

Recession can result from the healing response to gum treatment. Improving your homecare to prevent further progression of gum disease is an important factor in avoiding further recession.

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## *Dentine Sensitivity*

Dentine sensitivity is the pain that is felt when dentine, the softer part of your tooth, is stimulated. The stimulus can be from touch, heat and more commonly cold. The dentine is covered by enamel in the crown and by bone and gum in the root. Dentine is made up of many tiny tubules (channels), which contain fluid.

When stimulated the fluid carries signals to the nerves in the centre of the tooth.

Research shows that 1 in 3 people in the UK suffer from sensitive teeth at any one time. It occurs mostly in young adults between the ages of 20 to 40 years. If the enamel becomes thinner or the dentine is exposed through over brushing, recession or consuming acidic food and drink, then sensitivity may occur.

Use of good oral hygiene techniques, fluoride toothpaste, fluoride varnishes applied by your dentist or sealants over painful areas can all help.

