



## SENSITIVE SMILE?

Do you cringe from discomfort or pain when you drink a hot beverage or bite into a popsicle? If so, you may be suffering from sensitive teeth. Tooth sensitivity is a fairly common problem triggered by hot or cold foods and drinks, or even by breathing cold air.

[deltadentalmn.org/oral-health](http://deltadentalmn.org/oral-health)





*It's easy to smile when you feel good. LifeSmile is a wellness program that's part of your Delta Dental benefits provided by your employer. It's easier to maintain good oral health habits when you have some support. LifeSmile has the answers to your dental questions and can help keep you smiling for a lifetime.*

## What Causes Sensitive Teeth?

- Exposed dentin is usually to blame. Dentin is the tissue that makes up the core of each tooth.
- On the crown of the tooth a protective coating of enamel covers the dentin. When this enamel wears away or decays, the dentin becomes exposed and vulnerable to sensations, including pain.
- Periodontal (gum) disease—an infection of the gums and bone that support the teeth—may also be responsible.
- Gum disease or even too vigorous brushing can cause the gums to recede, leaving the root surfaces exposed, and causing pain.
- If gum disease isn't treated, it can progress until the bone and other tooth supporting tissues are damaged.

## How Your Dentist Can Help You Manage Sensitivity

Your dentist will examine your teeth, look for causes of sensitivity, and make treatment recommendations. A dentist can measure the severity of your sensitive teeth by spraying air across each area of your teeth to determine the exact location of sensitivity.

- If the sensitivity is caused by clenching or grinding, your dentist may recommend a mouth guard.
- Products for home use include desensitizing toothpastes and mouth rinses.
- In-office procedures include application of desensitizing agents or protective sealants.
- If gum tissue has been lost from the root (gum recession), your dentist may recommend a surgical gum graft to cover the root, protect the tooth and reduce the sensitivity.
- In cases in which hypersensitivity is severe and persistent and cannot be treated by other means, your dentist may recommend a filling to eliminate the problem.

LifeSmile from Delta Dental can help you prevent disease and keep you and your child on the path toward a healthier, happier life. Healthy Smile, Happy Life: Take advantage of numerous free resources for improving your oral health at [deltadental.org/oral-health](http://deltadental.org/oral-health).