



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.

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.
- If left untreated, gum disease can progress until the bone and other tooth-supporting tissues are damaged, leaving the root surfaces of teeth exposed and causing pain.

How Your Dentist Can Help You Manage Sensitivity

Your dentist will examine your teeth, look for causes of sensitivity, and make treatment recommendations.

- 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.

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 deltadentalmn.org/oral-health.

