

Caries

CASE CHALLENGE

Management plan:

- Reinforcement of good oral hygiene, and the need to ensure regular toothbrushing.
- Dietary advice – limit the soft drink and sweets intake. An artificially sweetened coffee flavoured milk was suggested as an alternative to soft drink, and sugar-free chewing gum to the sweets.
- Professional application of APF 1.23% gel during the initial visit.
- A NaF 1.23% gel to be given for nightly self-application to the sensitive areas until the next appointment.
- Initial recall in two weeks for a ten minute monitoring check, and to reinforce the preventive program.
- Six-weekly monitoring appointments were planned, as **it is often after initial short term success that old habits can gradually reappear.**
- Progression to three-monthly, and then six-monthly recall visits would depend on the success of the program.

Deborah was advised that dark intrinsic staining may appear on some surfaces. If that happened, a veneer of composite resin or GIC could be used to mask the staining, without removing tooth structure and weakening the tooth in the long term.

Two week recall:

- Dietary change had been followed consistently.
- Sensitivity had passed.
- Gingivitis had been well controlled.

- 0.05% APF mouthrinse was recommended for use nightly until next appointment, to replace the NaF gel.

Six week recall:

- Deborah admitted to having cola drinks "occasionally" instead of milk.
- Remineralisation appeared to be progressing well as determined by a slower rate of 'whitening' on drying of the 'white spot' lesions.
- A number of the lesions were heavily stained. Deborah had been drinking more black coffee to make up for the stimulation provided originally by the cola drinks, increasing the risk of staining in the remineralising lesions. It was recommended that black coffee be avoided, and if necessary, to be diluted with milk.

Three month recall:

It was evident the oral condition had stabilised.

A number of the lesions remained severely stained. Deborah felt that they were very visible on smiling, and therefore requested that veneers be placed over some of the more discoloured lesions.

Treatment to date:

It was decided that the diet and hygiene were well under control. A six-monthly brief monitoring appointment was made. As no further damage was evident after six months, and diet and hygiene were well controlled, six monthly visits were recommended for a further two years.

Welcome to the **Colgate Caries Control Program.** You will be receiving these newsletters about three times a year. They will update you on how the Program is going, and present clinical cases that are pertinent to the general dental practice setting.

The following patient has been treated successfully for multiple early caries lesions using an intensive preventive regimen for 18 months

Age: 17 years
Sex: Female

Presenting problem:

A sensitive reaction in her teeth to the cold soft drinks she was consuming frequently while studying for matriculation exams.

Past dental history:

Deborah had been a regular attender at the school dental service till age 12, and then at a private dentist till the age of 15. She had previously had very few cavities in her teeth, and as a result of routinely having no dental problems, she did not respond to further recall reminders for the next few years.

Each newsletter will present a clinical case challenge for you to ponder on. Please feel free to contribute to these newsletters by requesting that a particular aspect of caries management be addressed, or by passing on tips about how you approach caries control in your practice setting.

Figure 1
Patient's caries chart



