

Toothpastes containing special chemicals to control pain from sensitive teeth are known as desensitizing toothpastes. You should use a desensitizing toothpaste until pain stops. Your dental professional may advise you about the best time to stop using it.

Controlling dentine hypersensitivity

- Stop brushing too hard and using incorrect brushing techniques as they can damage your teeth and gums.
- Always use a soft toothbrush. Brushing your teeth with a soft brush minimizes damage to your teeth and gums. Using a hard brush may harm your teeth and gums.
- Reduce the frequency of taking acidic foods and drinks by confining these to main meals.
- Use a straw to drink acidic beverages.
- Rinse the mouth with water and avoid brushing for at least 30 minutes after taking acidic foods or drinks.
- Continue good oral hygiene habits.

REMEMBER

- AVOID** vigorous brushing
- AVOID** incorrect brushing techniques
- AVOID** using a hard toothbrush
- REDUCE** the frequency of taking acidic foods and drinks
- AVOID** brushing for at least 30 minutes after taking acidic foods or drinks

DO

- Use a soft toothbrush
- Use the correct brushing technique
- Brush twice per day
- Rinse the mouth with water after consuming acidic foods or drinks
- Visit your dental professional if you have sensitive teeth
- Use a desensitising toothpaste if advised by your dental professional

Further information

can be obtained from
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Sensitive teeth

*what's hurting
your teeth?*

Sensitive Teeth

Sensitive

Sensitive



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What is dentine hypersensitivity?

Dentine is the soft inner part of the tooth under the hard outer enamel surface. Usually, a short sharp pain coming up from exposed dentine due to cold, air, acid, touch and heat is known as dentine hypersensitivity.

You may get a similar pain caused by other dental diseases and conditions. Tooth decay, cracked teeth, chipped teeth, broken fillings, leaking fillings, gum disease and tooth whitening are some examples. Your dental professional will check your teeth and tell you whether the pain is due to dentine hypersensitivity or not.

Cold ... Sour ...
Hot ... Sweet ...
Ouch ...



If you get a sudden burst of pain or a prickly feeling in your teeth when you take cold, sour, hot or sweet foods/drinks you may have dentine hypersensitivity. Pain from dentine hypersensitivity is not always continuous. It can come and go. Continuous pain could be a sign of a more serious problem. It calls for urgent attention by your dental professional.

What causes dentine exposure?

Many factors play a role in causing dentine exposure.

- Receding gums
- Tooth wear due to brushing too hard, incorrect brushing, acid in diet, vomiting or reflux problems, and grinding teeth
- Advanced gum disease (and its treatment)
- Tooth whitening
- Unsatisfactory tooth fillings



Figure 1:
Receding gums

Figure 2:
Tooth wear due to dietary acid



Figure 3:
Tooth wear due to hard/incorrect brushing



Figure 4:
Tooth wear due to grinding teeth



Figure 5:
Exposed dentine due to advanced gum disease

Treatment

Once your dental professional confirms that you have dentine hypersensitivity he or she may recommend that you brush your teeth with a desensitizing toothpaste. He or she may advise you to avoid or minimize factors like hard or incorrect brushing and frequent intake of acidic foods or drinks. Your brushing technique may be corrected if necessary.

A follow-up appointment may be arranged to check if pain from dentine hypersensitivity keeps troubling you. If it still persists your dental professional may continue further treatment. You may also be referred to a specialist.

Sensitive

Sensitive

Sensitive