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Q&A WITH “THE EXTREME MAKEOVER” COSMETIC DENTIST ASH PARMAR

AVOIDING DECAY AND FILLINGS

Dental decay is one of the commonest dental problems around. Many people don't realize that decay can actually be prevented, thereby avoiding fillings, root canal treatments and further dental work. This article is important if you want healthy teeth for all your family.

What is decay?

Tooth decay occurs when bacteria in the plaque use sugar in food and drinks to produce ACID, which dissolves tooth surfaces. This acid causes cavities in teeth i.e. decay.

What is the treatment for decay?

First and foremost, education and prevention is the key. In children, we offer fissure sealants – these are tooth coloured sealants that help protect the vulnerable fissures on the biting surfaces of the molars and thus avoid decay. In adults, if there is a small or medium sized cavity, then fillings can be done with a laser without the need for injections or drilling. If there is a larger cavity, then a large white filling or a porcelain inlay should be considered. Gold and amalgam fillings are also available.

Finally, if the decay is really deep and has reached the nerve, then root canal treatment is required. This intricate treatment is comfortable once the area has been numbed up, but requires increased time and can be expensive. It is ideal to place a crown over a root



BEFORE: LEAKING AMALGAM (SILVER) FILLING WITH DECAY AROUND IT



AFTER: ARTISTICALLY SHAPED, TOOTH COLOURED FILLING

filled tooth to protect it in the long-term.

What are the advantages of tooth coloured (white) fillings?

White fillings are bonded to the tooth substance. They are strong and long lasting. The fillings also look very natural, and there is no mercury content (compared to the silver amalgam fillings).

What are the two types of tooth coloured filling?

Porcelain inlays or overlays are precision made porcelain fillings that are securely bonded to the tooth. They are the most cosmetic and strongest white fillings available. This is because porcelain is made from ceramic material, as opposed to conventional white fillings (composites) that are resin based. They are indicated for large cavities or badly broken down teeth.

For small to medium sized cavities, composite fillings are ideal. We have many shades of filling materials to match your teeth perfectly. These fillings are bonded to the tooth using a special bonding resin. We use a blue light to set the filling hard instantly so you can eat immediately. Careful attention is paid to shaping

and polishing the restoration to produce an ideal and smooth finish.

What are the best ways of preventing decay?

1. An annual clinical examination and regular X-rays are essential to detect and monitor decay.
2. Good oral hygiene. Patients who clean their teeth well (i.e. good tooth brushing and daily flossing) should have less decay because more of the plaque (containing bacteria) is removed.
3. Reduce the frequency of sugar intake. It is important to avoid sugary things in between meals. Each time you have something sweet to eat, the acid that is produced causes damage to the teeth for up to one hour. Therefore, the more often you have something sweet, the more decay can occur. A packet of polo mints eaten at regular intervals throughout the day can do far more damage than a bar of chocolate eaten in one go!
4. A patient who is at risk from decay should use a fluoride mouthwash (e.g. Colgate Fluoriguard) regularly. Fluoride strengthens the tooth surface

(enamel) and helps resist decay.

5. Sugar free chewing gum. Chewing sugar free gum following a sweet meal will wash away the acid quicker by increasing the amount of saliva produced in your mouth.
6. Avoid sugary food/drinks last thing at night. A cup of hot chocolate just before bed is not a good idea because whilst sleeping there is no saliva flow. Therefore the acid will linger on the teeth longer causing more decay.

Summary

At Smile Design By Ash, we provide comfortable dental care in a relaxed and unique atmosphere.

*Our Team members are highly professional, friendly and caring. Using the latest and best technologies and dental materials, our goal is to provide healthy, strong and long-lasting restorations. This will avoid repeat dentistry and save you money in the long-term. For further information, visit www.smiledesignbyash.co.uk or phone 020 85000544 for a **FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION**. We also welcome emergency patients – for an appointment on the same day as your dental emergency, look no further! ■*