

LASER TOOTH

Researchers in Australia and Taiwan have developed a new way to assess the condition of human tooth enamel using lasers. The process, explained in the August 31, 2009, issue of *Optic Express*, evaluates the mineral content of enamel by measuring how the surface of a tooth responds to laser-generated ultrasound. This is the first time a nondestructive means of measuring the elasticity of human teeth has developed, and the process could be used to predict emerging dental problems like decay, lesions, and caries. The process is still being tested and has only been performed on human extracted teeth. It will likely be several years before a device is available to dentists for use in their practice.

Although this type of laser is new, we've been using a laser in our office for years to help us detect cavities. This unit, called a DIAGNODENT, has been very effective in helping us to find hidden decay.