

TOOTH SENSITIVITY - part 1

Tooth sensitivity is something that affects many of us. In this 2 part series I'll answer many of the questions you might have regarding this often painful condition.

WHAT IS DENTIN HYPERSENSITIVITY?

Dentin hypersensitivity, more commonly referred to as sensitive teeth, can be defined as short, sharp pains that come from exposed dentin (the layer of tissue found beneath the hard enamel that contains the inner pulp).

Individuals with sensitive teeth may find that the pain can be triggered by hot, cold, sour or sweet beverages or foods, forceful brushing or flossing, or even by cold air.

WHAT CAUSES THE SENSITIVITY?

Tooth sensitivity is caused by the movement of fluid within tiny tubes (pores) located in the dentin, which results in nerve irritation. When the hard enamel of a tooth is worn down or gums have receded, the surfaces of these tiny tubes can be exposed, resulting in pain while eating or drinking certain foods, such as ice cream or cold coffee.

HOW COMMON IS THIS CONDITION?

Dentin hypersensitivity is one of the most common complaints among dental patients. One in five people in North America experience dentin hypersensitivity at some point in his or her life.