

Erosive tooth wear in different age groups: Patterns and preventive measures

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Description

Erosive tooth wear is a form of dental erosion characterized by the gradual loss of tooth structure due to acid attack. This condition affects individuals across various age groups, presenting with distinct patterns and requiring tailored preventive measures. In children and adolescents, erosive tooth wear often results from dietary habits. Consumption of acidic beverages, such as fruit juices and carbonated drinks, can lead to enamel erosion. Additionally, the frequent intake of acidic foods, such as citrus fruits and candies, contributes to the gradual wearing away of tooth enamel. The enamel of young teeth is particularly susceptible to erosion due to its relatively softer and thinner nature. To address these issues, parents and caregivers should encourage a diet low in acidic foods and beverages and promote the use of fluoride toothpaste to strengthen enamel. Regular dental check-ups are also important for monitoring the condition and providing early intervention if signs of erosion are detected.

In adults, erosive tooth wear can be influenced by both dietary and lifestyle factors. Acidic foods and drinks continue to play a role, but other factors such as Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) and chronic vomiting can contribute significantly to enamel erosion. GERD causes stomach acids to flow back into the esophagus and mouth, leading to acid exposure and subsequent tooth wear. Preventive measures for adults include managing underlying conditions such as GERD, reducing the consumption of acidic foods and drinks, and using fluoride treatments to protect and strengthen the enamel. Additionally, the use of a neutralizing mouth rinse after acidic meals can help minimize acid exposure. Elderly individuals may experience erosive tooth wear due to prolonged exposure to acidic substances over a lifetime. The cumulative effect of acidic diets, medications, and age-related changes in saliva production can contribute to enamel erosion.

Older adults often face additional challenges, such as diminished salivary flow, which decreases the mouth's ability to neutralize acids and remineralize tooth enamel. Preventive measures for the elderly include avoiding acidic foods and beverages, using fluoride toothpaste and mouth rinses, and addressing any medical conditions that may exacerbate erosion.

Regular dental visits are essential for monitoring enamel wear and providing appropriate treatments to mitigate further damage. In all age groups, effective prevention of erosive tooth wear involves several key strategies. Limiting the consumption of acidic foods and drinks is fundamental in reducing the risk of enamel erosion. When consuming acidic substances, it is advisable to use a straw to minimize contact with the teeth and to rinse the mouth with water afterward to help neutralize acids. Chewing sugar-free gum can also stimulate saliva production, which aids in the natural buffering of acids and promotes enamel remineralization.

Fluoride plays a significant role in the prevention and management of erosive tooth wear. Fluoride treatments, such as varnishes and gels applied by a dentist, can provide additional protection and help strengthen enamel. Over-the-counter fluoride toothpaste is also effective in providing daily protection against erosion. In cases where significant wear has occurred, dental restorations or sealants may be necessary to protect the affected teeth and restore function. Education and awareness are vital in the prevention of erosive tooth wear. Informing individuals about the risks associated with acidic foods and beverages and the importance of good oral hygiene practices can empower them to make healthier choices. Public health campaigns and dental community initiatives can help disseminate this information and promote preventive measures on a larger scale.

Conclusion

In conclusion, erosive tooth wear presents distinct patterns across different age groups, influenced by dietary habits, medical conditions, and lifestyle factors. Preventive measures include managing dietary intake, using fluoride treatments, and addressing underlying health conditions. Regular dental check-ups and education on oral health practices further enhance the effectiveness of prevention efforts. By implementing these strategies, individuals can mitigate the risk of erosive tooth wear and maintain long-term dental health.

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