



# JULY

*Dental Digest*  
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## **A Real Pain In The Tooth!**

There's nothing more refreshing on a hot, summer day or after a vigorous workout session than ice cold drinks or a frozen treat! Unfortunately for some, that blissful sensation is trumped by severe pain.

### **A Sensitive Subject**

Roughly one out of eight people suffer from tooth sensitivity! Tooth sensitivity strikes when the layer that lies underneath your teeth, known as the dentin, becomes exposed. This exposure can be from receding gum tissue (the protective cover that blankets your tooth's roots).

The roots are not covered by hard enamel like your teeth and are made up of thousands of tiny tubes that lead to the tooth's nerve center. These tubes are what give your teeth sensations such as hot and cold by reaching the nerve in your tooth. This triggers that painful sensation when you bite into something that is too hot, too cold, or sometimes even too sweet.

However, receding gums isn't the only cause of sensitive teeth. There are numerous other causes, such as:

- **Brushing too hard**

This won't happen over night, but if you're using a hard-bristled toothbrush and are really putting all your might into teeth brushing, you can wear down your enamel and gums over time.

- **Gum disease and recession**

As aforementioned, if you suffer from periodontal disease (gum disease, gingivitis), the root surface of your gums will become exposed. Receding gums, along with sore gum tissue, play a large part in tooth sensitivity.

- **Cracked teeth**

If you've chipped or broken a tooth, it could fill with bacteria from plaque and move into the tooth's pulp chamber (where the blood vessels and connective tissue live) and cause the area to become inflamed and thus, more sensitive.

- **Bruxism (teeth grinding)**

Clenching and grinding your teeth wears down the enamel, exposing the underlying dentin.

- **Teeth whitening products**

Baking soda and peroxide are ingredients generally used in teeth whitening toothpastes, strips and molds. These ingredients can cause teeth sensitivity because of their bleaching effect.

- **Acidic foods**

Citrus fruits, pickles, tomatoes and even tea all have a high acid content. These foods cause enamel to erode and increase your chances of having sensitive teeth.

- **Overuse of mouthwash**

Like acidic foods, over-the-counter mouthwashes also contain acids that can worsen tooth sensitivity. However, this doesn't mean you can't use them regularly. It's when mouthwash is overused that it contributes to tooth sensitivity.

## Causes Continued...

- **Regular dental procedures**

Teeth cleaning, crown placement, tooth restoration and other typical dental procedures can add to temporary tooth sensitivity. Rest assured that with procedures like these, this sensitivity goes away within a few weeks.

## Ways to Combat Sensitivity

### 1. Go To The Dentist

By examining your teeth Dr. Turman will be able to find out what is causing your sensitivity and treat your symptoms. He will also be able to advise you on which dental products will best relieve your sensitivity. Sensitivity could signify the start of a more serious dental problem. By catching a problem early on Dr. Turman will be able to monitor and treat your sensitivity. If you ignore your tooth sensitivity you may end up requiring expensive, invasive treatment which could have been avoided.

### See the hygienist regularly:

Tooth sensitivity is commonly caused by a build-up of plaque and tartar around the gum-line and the recession of the gums. Our hygienists will clear away plaque and tartar, concentrating on built up areas around the gum line and any hard to reach dental pockets. A fluoride varnish can be applied as well to help with sensitivity. Our hygienists will also advise on areas you are missing when brushing and techniques to amend and improve your home care routine.

## Ways to Combat Sensitivity at Home:

- **Brushing your teeth with a toothpaste formulated specifically to treat sensitivity.** These toothpastes work by numbing the tooth sensitivity. These toothpastes generally contain potassium nitrate, which calms the nerve of the tooth. Other sensitive specific toothpastes work by blocking the tubules in the dentine, these toothpastes usually contain a chemical called strontium chloride. Repeated use builds up a strong barrier by plugging the tubules more and more, leading to less-sensitive teeth.

- **Avoid eating acidic foods and drinks.**

- **Floss regularly.**

- **Use a fluoride mouthwash to strengthen your enamel.**

- **To treat acute pain,** rub a small amount of toothpaste (sensitive specific toothpaste) directly onto the sensitive area of the tooth.

## Strong Teeth are Healthy Teeth

It cannot be overstressed: prevention is the most effective and pleasant way of saving your teeth.

There are common foods to boost your teeth's resistance against decay: fish and green tea contain high levels of fluoride, though supplementing them with fluoride toothpaste is never a bad call. Also shoot for calcium, found in non-fat dairy, almonds, Brazil nuts, cheeses and sardines; red wine and cranberry juice; and phosphorus, which goes hand-in-hand with proteins like fish, eggs and meat.

Don't let sensitive teeth get in the way of your enjoyment this summer! Stop in to Turman Dental at either our Wishek or Linton office to see how we can help you get the most out of your summer!