

# TOOTH ACHE

Tooth aches typically show up as sensitivity to temperatures, sweets or chewing, but may also present as throbbing, aching or sharp stabbing pains. Some tooth aches are quite mild and can go on for years while others are debilitating and must be addressed immediately.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. **What causes a Tooth Ache?**

A tooth ache is caused by inflammation or infection which happens inside your tooth. It may also be caused by tooth root exposure, decay or trauma.

### 2. **Who is at high risk for a Tooth Ache?**

Some people are at higher risk for having tooth aches.

Risk factors for having a tooth ache include:

- Receding gums which expose tooth roots
- Tooth decay
- Tooth trauma from:
  - Existing deep fillings or crowns
  - Routine dental procedures
  - Sports
  - Night time tooth grinding
  - Bite problems

### 3. **What can I do to minimize my risk of a Tooth Ache?**

To minimize your risk of a tooth ache, there are important things that you need to do. The first critical step is to have the cause of the tooth ache diagnosed by your dentist.

*\* If infection is present it must be treated in a timely manner to avoid a more serious health risk.*

Your dentist may suggest the following:

- Address tooth decay
- Wear a mouthguard when playing sports
- Wear a night guard if night time tooth grinding is suspected
- Address bite problems
- Cover exposed tooth roots with gum grafts or dental restorations
- Treat teeth with fluoride and home care aids which decrease root sensitivity

### 4. **What will happen if I choose to do nothing about my Tooth Ache?**

Ignoring a tooth ache may lead to the following:

- Increased pain or infection requiring a root canal treatment or an extraction
- Continued stress which may cause the tooth to fracture
- Continued sensitivity which prevents you from eating comfortably

Although occasionally pain resolves without treatment, it is important to have your dentist assess the risk of your tooth ache.