



What causes a cavity?

Cavity-causing bacteria likes to eat sugar just like we do! It does not have to be candy or soda... chips, pretzels, goldfish crackers, and dried fruit can be big culprits in increasing someone's decay risk. The cavity-causing bacteria does not care how much sugar as much as how often... frequent snacking, sipping on pretty much anything but water, and eating stuff that sticks to the teeth increases your risk for cavities or holes in your teeth because EVERY TIME you eat something like that, the bacteria eat it too and they produce acid which starts to dissolve the teeth. Caries, the bacterial disease that causes cavities, can be contagious. It is most commonly passed from parent to child, but can also be transmitted between adults. Left untreated, the caries process will continue to progress, which can lead to pain. You have the power to change your risk moving forward, and we are looking forward to partnering with you on your journey.

What can you do?

- Close your lips and breathe through your nose AT ALL TIMES. Our saliva is one of our biggest defenses. Mouth breathing dries out the tissues and creates an imbalance between the good and bad bacteria. It can even change how our jaws develop and lead to crowded teeth that are harder to keep clean.
- Consider systematic root causes like sleep disordered breathing or Type 2 diabetes that might be contributing. It's all connected, and it is never one thing!
- Let us coach you on how to effectively clean your teeth during your routine well-visits. We love electric toothbrushes and will help teach you how to get in between your teeth where the toothbrush bristles cannot reach with floss or other tools that may be better for you. We wish this stuff was taught in school!
- Switch to prescription strength toothpaste (has 5 times as much fluoride as what you can get over the counter) or nanohydroxyapatite toothpaste which has been shown to be as effective as fighting cavities as fluoride, but is what the teeth are made of.
- Use Xylitol products up to five times a day. Xylitol is a natural sugar that can help lower the amount of bacteria in your mouth that cause cavities. If you experience stomach upset when using the product, decrease the amount you are using. Note: Keep away from dogs - xylitol can be deadly to them.
- Read nutrition labels knowing 4 grams = 1 teaspoon of sugar. You may be surprised how much hidden sugar you find!
- Consider treating with Silver Diamine Fluoride which may help slow the decay process and change the risk for decay moving forward.