



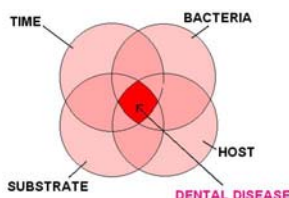
Dr. Michael Guy
Family Dentist

Decay

From the Office of Dr. Michael J. Guy 511A Lakeshore Drive, North Bay ON, P1A 2E3

Dental decay, or caries, is one of the most common conditions affecting your health. Dental decay is a disease, which can result in the destruction and loss of your teeth

For decay to occur requires the interaction of four factors: Time, bacteria, substrate (sugar) and host (teeth)



Unless all four factors are present, decay or gum problems do not occur. Proper brushing combined with flossing works to eliminate or minimize the bacteria component of this interaction to prevent decay and gum problems.

Are there factors that increase or decrease your susceptibility to decay?

Whether you get decay or not is a balance between several factors. Some factors are beyond your control, but fortunately most are not. Here is a list of some more common factors.

- the fluoride in your drinking water as a child
- the fluoride in your drinking water now whether tap,
- Drink filtered or bottled water
- Strong family history of dental decay

The condition of your mouth

- The number of Teeth
- Have receding gums or history of gum disease
- Have multiple fillings and/or crowns
- Currently wear orthodontic braces
- Teeth that just don't feel clean; trap food
- Have sensitivity to hot, cold or touch

Your habits

- How well and how often you brush and floss
- Do you visit the dentist/dental office irregularly
- Snack frequently between meals
- Use chewing gum, lozenges or hard candy with sugar between meals; or strong breath mints
- Sip on beverages throughout day (other than water)
- Use tobacco products of any type
- Grind teeth frequently
- Use home whitening products

Medical Problems that:

- Limit your hand dexterity
- Currently undergoing (or history of) chemotherapy or radiation therapy

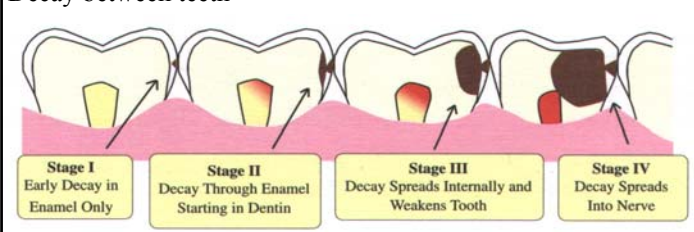
Where can decay occur?

Decay can occur just about anywhere on a tooth. It can occur on the biting surface, in-between teeth, the sides, under existing fillings, or on exposed roots.

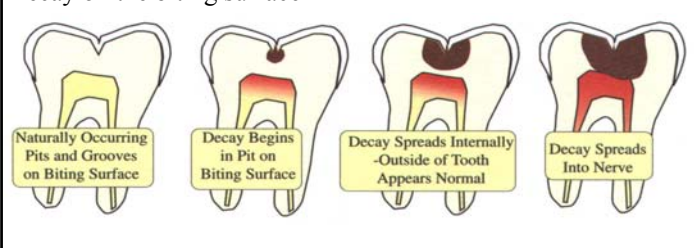
What happens if I leave the decayed teeth untreated?

Decay will progress and get bigger without pain. With time it will spread to the nerve

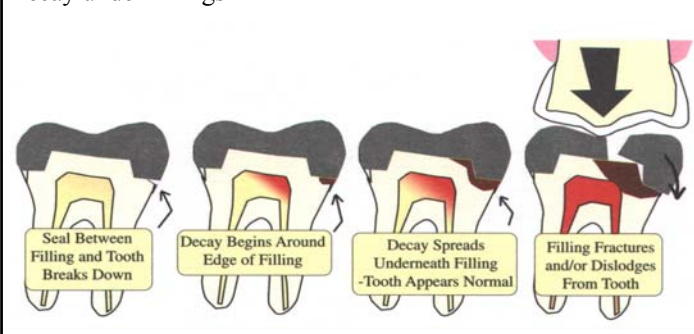
Decay between teeth



Decay on the biting surface



Decay under fillings



What happens if I postpone or put treatment off?

Postponing or putting off treatment will result in:

- ⇒ a weakening of the tooth,
- ⇒ the need fillings which are more sensitive once treatment is done,
- ⇒ the need for complicated treatments such as root canals and crowns to repair and restore the damaged tooth,
- ⇒ the need for longer treatment time,
- ⇒ More cost. Early treatment of decay is simple, and relatively inexpensive
- ⇒ Possible tooth loss



DECAY TREATMENT/DENTAL FILLINGS

From the Office of Dr. Michael J. Guy 511A Lakeshore Drive, North Bay ON, P1A 2E3

Types of Dental Fillings

Composite Resin Fillings

If you have a cavity or need an existing filling replaced, we will place composite resin. These fillings are preferred over amalgam. Composite Resin Dental Fillings are made of a strong, durable, tooth-coloured plastic dental resin that are placed directly into the tooth. Composite can be placed provide there is no significant structural damage to the tooth.



ADVANTAGES OF WHITE FILLINGS:

- Since they bond to the tooth, composite fillings will help to support the remaining tooth structure which will lessen breakage and damage to your tooth. Silver fillings weaken the teeth, making them more susceptible to breaking. Since broken teeth are very expensive to restore, composites can save a lot of expense over the long run.
- Composite fillings restore the natural appearance of the tooth.
- Composites are mercury-free fillings.
- Composites require less removal of tooth structure. Especially with new cavities, the size of the hole made for the filling can be dramatically smaller with composites.

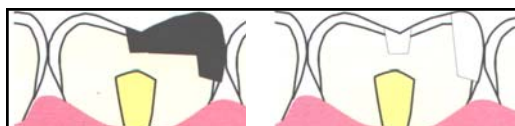
Amalgam Fillings

Amalgam or silver fillings are a mixture of mercury liquid and small pieces of silver and other metals such as copper, tin and zinc. Because they contain mercury their safety has been in question for a number of years. However Health Canada investigations have not proven they are health hazard



ADVANTAGES OF SILVER FILLINGS:

- Easier to place
- They are generally less expensive. Composite fillings, if they are done correctly are more time consuming to place, and so they are more expensive than amalgam fillings. Some insurance companies will not pick up all of this extra cost.
- The proper placement of a white filling requires that the site for the filling be kept totally isolated from saliva while it is being placed. In the very back of the mouth, on some patients, it is difficult to keep the tooth isolated for the duration of the procedure. This can also be uncomfortable for some patients. A silver amalgam filling does not require this strict isolation of the tooth.
- The filling by itself is a stronger material, although it weakens the tooth.
- Silver fillings have a longer history of use than mercury-free fillings, thus some feel that they are more tried and tested.



Composite filling on right requires less tooth removal than amalgam filling on left

Crown and Onlays

If a tooth is significantly weakened from extensive decay it requires the protection of a crown or onlay. A crown or onlay will replace the lost tooth structure, support the existing tooth structure and protect it from fracture. Crown and onlay material can be gold or tooth-coloured composite or porcelain. Crowns and onlays are called "indirect fillings" and require two appointments to place. They are made in a laboratory from an impression at the first appointment and they bonded into the tooth at the second appointment.



Temporary fillings (ZOE)

Temporary fillings are "sedative" fillings". They are made of two major components: Oil of clove (eugenol), which has been used for centuries to relieve toothaches, and Zinc Oxide. The oil and oxide mix together to make a stiff paste that eventually hardens into a waterproof substance which soothes the nerve of the tooth and kills germs while protecting the cavity like a hard band aid. When used as a temporary filling material or cement, this material is called "zinc oxide and eugenol", or ZOE for short.

Temporaries are placed if you have pain from a cavity or filling. It is placed and if the tooth begins to feel better you are reappoint for a final permanent filling at another visit. If it does not make the tooth feel better, there is most likely nerve damage and the tooth will require root canal or extraction.

Temporaries are not meant to last that long. Though the tooth may feel better, the restoration wears rapidly and begins to leak. If you wait too long, the tooth will decay and break further, the nerve could die, and then you will need a root canal or extraction

Complications After Treatment of Decay and Cavities

⇒ Possible Sensitivity



When **any** type of filling is done on a tooth, some sensitivity to cold and pressure is normal. This often lasts for as much as a month after the filling is done. The amount of post operative discomfort associated with any given filling depends on the depth and extent of the cavity preparation which in turn depends upon the depth and extent of the original area of decay or of the old filling which is to be replaced.

Sensitivity can also be caused by:

- The filling being to high
- Inflammation of the nerve
- A tiny crack in the tooth

⇒ Root Canal or loss of tooth

In some cases because the decay or a crack caused nerve damage, sensitivity does not settle down. In these cases the tooth ultimately requires a root canal or extraction