



Treat tooth decay early

The facts about decay and deep fillings

Dental decay occurs when bacteria left on the teeth produces acids that eat away at the teeth, causing a cavity.

Once the hard enamel surface of the tooth has a cavity, the bacteria can enter the tooth and attack the soft inner dentine. If decay is left in a tooth, the tooth will in time become painful and abscess.

What causes decay?

When the decay becomes so large it goes close to the nerve (pulp) the risk of complications such as tooth fracture or abscess increase.

How to tell if decay and old fillings are causing teeth to crack and abscess?

When decay is allowed to go deeper into the tooth it can result in cracking and abscessing of the tooth. Relying on X-Rays or the naked eye to detect cracking or abscesses may mean the tooth is already "too far gone" to be saved.

Early cracking and abscesses are best detected using a combination of:

1. Pain in the tooth from chewing, or hot/cold/sweet food and drink
2. Pain from cold air on the tooth
3. Laser light detection of surface cracks

How Today's Dentistry treat decay

If left untreated, may cause the tooth to split completely in half and the tooth will need to be removed.



If detected and treated early a tooth with a deep filling can be strengthened by crowning. This is the most predictable technique for preventing and treating fractures.

Once the fracture has gone close to the nerve (pulp) in the tooth, the tooth may abscess and to treat this level of infection requires root canal therapy in addition to a crown.

How to reduce further problems?

Problems with deep fillings are more likely when they are placed under increased stress.

This is commonly due to:

1. Uneven biting forces
2. Clenching and grinding habits
3. Destructive habits such as chewing ice

These strong forces can be reduced by fine-tuning your bite or making a protective night guard.

Today's Dentistry is here to help

Teeth with deep fillings can fracture or abscess with little or no warning.

If you are experiencing acute pain, contact us on **3263 2677** to make an emergency appointment.

Visit www.todaysdentistry.com.au or call **3263 2677** for more valuable facts for you and your family's dental health.