



Do you shy away from drinking icy beverages for fear of the pain you'll feel with every sip? If so, you're not alone. Forty-five million adults in America suffer from sensitive teeth.

Teeth typically become sensitive when the dentin of the teeth is exposed. The dentin is the second, sensitive layer found under the enamel on the crowns of your teeth and the cementum on the roots of your teeth. Normally, the enamel protects the dentin. But when the enamel is worn down, or gums have receded to expose the dentin, painful sensitivity occurs.

CAUSES

- **Poor brushing habits**—brushing too hard or using a hard-bristled toothbrush that wears away enamel
- **Receding gums**—gums recede to expose the dentin
- **Gum disease**—inflamed and sore gum tissue causes gum movement and tooth sensitivity
- **Cracked teeth**—broken teeth can attract bacteria from plaque, causing an inflammatory reaction
- **Grinding your teeth**—wears away the enamel
- **Plaque buildup**—increases sensitivity

TREATMENT

Be sure to talk to your dental care provider who will best be able to properly diagnose your sensitivity and recommend the proper treatment. In the meantime, some of the following could help:

- **Use a soft-bristled toothbrush**—easier on your enamel
- **Use a desensitizing toothpaste**—help decrease sensitivity
- **Watch what you eat**—stay away from acidic foods like citrus products and soda that can gradually dissolve enamel
- **Use fluoridated dental products**—can help decrease sensitivity

With proper oral care, you'll be able to eat your ice cream and enjoy it, too.

For information on the TRICARE Dental Program, or to find more "Dental Health 101" tips, visit us online at www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com.

UNITED CONCORDIA
Insuring America's Dental Health