

## The Facts on Tooth Decay



*Presented By*  
**Dr. Walter R. Below, D.M.D**

Tooth decay takes place in a tooth when the tooth's enamel has been damaged or has dissolved, resulting in a hole or tooth cavity. Causes of tooth decay vary, but overall the damages caused by bacteria living in the mouth as a result of poor dental hygiene. These bacteria eat the same food as we do and thrive on sugars in our food and drinks. These same bacteria release acids, responsible for the breakdown of minerals on our teeth.

### Mild and Severe Tooth Decay

Depending on the seriousness of the tooth decay pro-

cess, tooth decay needs different kinds of treatment. Holes formed by mild tooth decay are experienced by nearly every person, at least once in their life. These holes are filled and the tooth is as good as new.

Severe tooth decay might result in having the tooth capped with a crown, to protect the damaged part of the tooth. Root canal treatment is also an option. In root canal treatment the infected core of the tooth (the pulp) is removed, thus removing the infection inside the tooth. Extraction of the tooth is the last option if severe tooth decay has damaged the tooth to a point where it cannot be treated anymore.

### Types of Tooth Decay

*Occlusal Caries;* A form of dental carriers in fissures on the top surface of the tooth that we use to chew food. This area is called the occlusal surface of the tooth. This process of tooth

decay starts slowly and can remain unnoticed for over a year. The tooth is attached by bacteria living on sugars and the enamel of the tooth is damaged.

*Facial Caries;* A late or untreated tooth decay process may lead to complications such as facial swelling and the passing on of pus coming from an infection in the mouth, to another area in the body, usually the face or cavity in the facial area.

If tooth decay, or caries, is not treated properly, it may lead to other painful side effects such as inflammation of the pulp inside the tooth. The bacteria in pus coming from infections could possibly spread to organs in the body.

### Signs and Symptoms of Tooth Decay

- Halitosis
- Toothache to hot or cold liquids and foods

### Causes of Tooth Decay

Poor dental hygiene and neglect rank among the top

*Dr. Below strives to stay ahead of the curve on new techniques and information to better serve his patients. He participates in over 100 hours of continuing education annually and has memberships in organizations like the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry focused on dentistry's future from a scientific and/or esthetic perspective.*

*Dr. Walter R. Below has practiced in Westlake for over 20 years, receiving his dental degree at the University of Louisville's School of Dentistry in 1981.*

*He is a Fellow in the Academy of General Dentistry, General Member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, and member of the American Dental Society of Anesthesiology and American Association of Hospital Dentists.*

*He was a Clinical Instructor in the Department of Periodontics at Case Western Reserve Dental School and on medical staff of Lakewood Hospital.*

reasons for cavities. Caries can take up to 7 years to cause a cavity in a tooth and can therefore go unnoticed for a long period of time.

### Did you know?

Plaque contains up to 400 different kinds of bacteria, and starts to form on and in between teeth when bacteria and food and sugar remains are not effectively cleaned from the teeth. This accumulation

of bacteria is one of the main causes of tooth decay, and will slowly break down the enamel of the tooth, after which it will attach the pulp of the tooth.

People who suffer from diabetes are, due to ever changing blood sugar levels, more prone to dental caries. For these people it is overly important to take good care of the teeth and gums to prevent any accumulation of plaque.

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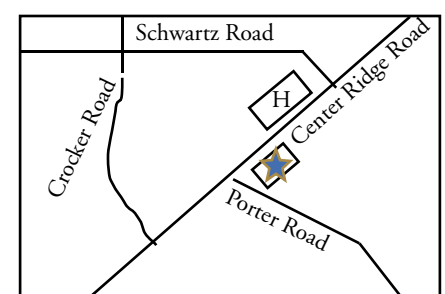


### Walter R. Below, D.M.D. Inc. Stephen R. Merkum, D.D.S.

29143 Center Ridge Rd.  
Westlake, OH 44145  
(across from St. John's  
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