

## Why do teeth decay?

There are three factors which determine whether your teeth will decay.

Firstly there is heredity. Your genetic makeup may have blessed you with teeth which are resistant to decay. On the other hand you may have teeth which are highly susceptible to decay. You will need to take extra care. The second factor is your diet. More important than the amount of sugar you eat, is the frequency of sweet treats. The more often you have sugar in your saliva, (from sweets or gum, sugar in tea and coffee, biscuits and snacks,) the more likely you are to develop new areas of tooth decay. The third factor is the presence of plaque on your teeth. The bacteria in plaque will convert sugars in your saliva into acid which will begin the decay process.

### What can I do?

First and foremost is to make sure that every surface of every tooth is spotlessly clean all the time. This is achieved by meticulous brushing and daily flossing. Last thing every night you must rinse your mouth with a pure fluoride mouthwash for approximately 40 seconds. Also moderate the frequency of sweet treats in your diet. Try restrict sweets and sugar to meal times, and brush or rinse your mouth immediately after meals or chew sugarless gum.

### How can you help?

Teeth which have no decay can have their grooves (pits and fissures) sealed to make them more resistant to attack. This is usually carried out by your dentist. Only teeth which are smooth and free of staining can be effectively cleaned. Our highly skilled hygienists will ensure that your teeth are free of staining and smooth. Only this way will you be able to keep these surfaces free of bacteria. We also make sure that you know the best way of brushing, and teach you an easy way to clean in between your teeth with floss or other inter-dental cleaners. These visits are carried out every three months and the value of this regime is well documented in the literature.

**Prevent problems and keep smiling!**