

Glossary of Dental Terms

Amalgam Filling	A metal alloy which becomes a soft paste on mixing and later hardens. It is silver in colour and contains Mercury.
Avulsion	When a tooth is removed traumatically from its socket, for example by falling over and hitting the tooth.
Bruxism	The involuntary grinding or clenching of the teeth, often associated with stress or anxiety.
Calculus	A hard deposit of mineralized plaque attached to the teeth (tartar).
Caries	Tooth Decay.
Cavity	A hole in a tooth, normally caused by decay.
Composite Filling	Resin-based filling material, which is tooth coloured, that is set using an ultraviolet light.
Deciduous Tooth	Baby tooth or milk tooth.
Diastema	Space occurring between two neighbouring teeth.
Enamel	The hard outer layer of the top half of a tooth.
Erosion	The gradual loss of enamel, for example from acidic drinks.
Exfoliation	The natural loss of a deciduous tooth.
Fissure	A small groove or trough in the enamel of a tooth.
Gingivitis	Inflammation of the gingivae.
Gingiva	Gum.
Halitosis	Bad breath.
Impacted	When a tooth grows through at the wrong angle and cannot erupt fully due to being wedged against another tooth. Common in wisdom teeth.
Impression	An imprint or mould taken of teeth used to cast a model of the teeth.
Mandible	Lower Jaw.
Mastication	Chewing food.
Maxilla	Upper Jaw.
Partially Erupted	A tooth which is only half way through the gum.
Periodontal Disease	Disease of the tissue that supports the teeth.
Permanent Tooth	Adult Tooth.
Radiograph	X-Ray.
Toothbrush Abrasion	The loss of tooth surface or filling due to brushing too hard.