

Ask The Dentists

Dear Dr. Winter, I am a 45yr old woman. I noticed that at my gum line on several teeth, my enamel has suddenly chipped off. No dentist can figure out why? There is no decay, I use a soft toothbrush and have a healthy diet- please help!

Dear Karen, I am sorry for your problems. Notches in teeth that are not associated with cavities are called, non-cariou cervical lesions. They are usually caused by a combination of factors that include bio-corrosion, abrasion, and bites that are off.

There are several factors to consider in answering your question. First your diet: how acidic, how abrasive, do you chew on bones or suck on lemons?

Second we would examine your past medical history to find out if you were ever bulimic or had habits that could be showing up now? Do you have GERD or gastro-esophageal reflux that has acid from your stomach in contact with your teeth?

Third, do you grind your teeth during times of stress or at night? If so, do you have a nocturnal bruxism appliance (mouthguard)? Lastly, if there is no explanation and these lesions are sensitive they may require restorations and careful monitoring of your bite. A mouthguard called a bruxism appliance can decrease forces on your teeth and is made to wear at night while other appliances can be used during the day to decrease grinding habits.

Lastly, it should be noted that wear can occur at the gum-line area from cyclic occlusal loading or heavy chewing and grinding, and studies have shown that enamel fractures occur at the cemento-enamel junction (gumline) after 200,000 cycles or approximately two and a half months of chewing.

If teeth with notches oppose crowned teeth,



Drs. Richard and Bruce Winter

teeth with bridges or implants or teeth with large restorations, they may not be adjusted properly and may be contributing to your notches! We will examine all of these possibilities at your comprehensive examination visit.

If our readers would like to have an occlusal evaluation or second opinion, please call us at 414-464-9021. We invite you to visit our websites at www.winterdental.com for photos, videos and more information about our dentistry.

We look forward to meeting you!
Bruce Winter D.D.S.

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