

## EROSION



### The causes of erosion

Erosion is most commonly associated with the frequent consumption of foodstuffs containing acids including:

- Phosphoric acid – contained in cola drinks
- Citric acids – found in acidic fruit, fruit juices, soft drinks and diet colas
- Ascorbic acid – used in sports drinks and sweets

### Spotting signs of erosion

- Initially erosion will produce a 'frosted' surface.
- Additional effects of abrasion from a toothbrush, for example, will produce a smooth, glazed appearance.
- On anterior teeth, enamel may be thinned so that teeth appear translucent. Chipping of incisal edges may also occur.
- Hollows in the teeth may become evident as well as a general wearing away of the tooth surface and biting edges.
- Dentine can become exposed, which is darker and more yellow than enamel. This may lead to sensitivity.

## Patient tips

- Try to reduce the amount and frequency of acidic foods and drinks consumed.
- To reduce their harmful effect, drink acidic drinks at meal times and avoid sipping them over prolonged periods.
- Be aware that diet drinks contain as much acid as original varieties.
- Know the facts – even foods perceived as healthy (such as fruit & fruit juices) may still be acidic.
- Don't brush teeth for at least 30 minutes after eating or drinking to minimise the effects of erosion.

## Helping yourself

It is difficult to know the potential erosive nature of many everyday foods and drinks. We know it can be difficult to immediately change your dietary habits so we have highlighted the different acidity levels of several common foods and drinks to help you.

Food	pH Value (low figure = high acidity)
Mineral water	pH 7.6
Milk	pH 6.9
Cheddar cheese	pH 5.9
Tomato ketchup	pH 3.9
Orange juice	pH 3.8
Apple juice	pH 3.0
Cola / Red wine	pH 2.5
Lemon juice	pH 2.3

