

# TOOTHFULLY. *speaking*



Dr. Preeti Desai

## **Tooth Sensitivity!**

**I**F A SUMMER ICE cream or a sweet cold pop this summer sends twinges up your spine... you likely suffer from one of the most common dental pains: tooth sensitivity.

There are many causes of sensitivity but they all result in the outer tough enamel coating of the tooth crown being worn or destroyed, exposing the inner sensitive part of the tooth: the dentin, which has tubules and channels filled with nerves. Whether the sensitivity begins gradually and you ignore it until you can't anymore or it begins with a broken tooth or a cavity and you HAVE to deal with it - common sense precipitates that treatment sooner rather than later is cheaper, easier and less invasive.

Treatment of tooth sensitivity is dictated by how you got there in the first place:

- a)** The drive to have super white hollywood teeth using whitening agents, is a major cause of short term sensitivity as the bleach leaches into the enamel but also reaches the dentin filled with nerves in the canals
- b)** Periodontal disease is the main cause of dental sensitivity, resulting in bone loss followed by gum recession exposing the dentin again - obviously we have talked at length about gum disease treatment with laser earlier rather than later
- c)** Excessive clenching, grinding or aggressive toothbrushing with and without an electric toothbrush causes gum recession independent of gum disease - today we can cover recessed teeth and get back some of what mother nature put there to cover the tooth's dentin - the alternative is covering this dentin with white fillings but this plastic needs to be replaced and is invasive, unnatural and stains just like teeth do
- d)** Short term fixes like desensitizing toothpastes need reapplication as the active desensitizing ingredient wears away - it is better to apply this toothpaste via finger tip to the sensitive surface as opposed to brushing with it.... you will find it abrasive and this is contradictory to relieving your sensitivity
- e)** Finally the least invasive method of treatment is low level laser therapy (LLLT) as it works to heal and desensitize the dentin from inside out and "calms" the dentinal nerves but repeat episodes may be necessary - in the long run this is the best and least invasive.

So if you suffer from even slight twinges of sensitivity - talk to your periodontist and dentist as treatment is cheaper and easier the earlier you seek it out.



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