



DENTAL HEALTH TIP

Brush up on dental terminology

Understanding dental lingo

Has your dentist or hygienist used words and phrases you don't fully understand? Don't hesitate to ask for an explanation. It's important that you understand dental terms regarding diagnostic procedures and treatment recommendations.

Below are a few common dental terms frequently used by dental professionals when providing care to patients.

Abscess: An infection of the tooth, soft tissue or surrounding bone.

Caries or cavities: Decay found in or on the tooth surface.

Composite resin fillings: Tooth-colored fillings made of plastic and ceramic compounds.

Crown: An artificial replacement that repairs damaged tooth structure by surrounding it with a "cap" to restore its normal shape, size and function.

Enamel: The hard, outer surface layer of the tooth that protects against tooth decay.

Endodontist: A dental specialist that treats the soft pulp tissue inside the tooth and surrounding the roots of the tooth (i.e. root canal).

Periodontitis: Gum disease that damages the tissue and/or bone around the teeth and is the leading cause of tooth loss.

Plaque: Soft, sticky film that adheres to teeth and contains bacteria that causes tooth decay.

Sealants: A thin, protective coating that adheres to the enamel of a tooth "sealing out" plaque and preventing cavities. Sealants can be especially important for posterior permanent teeth during cavity-prone years.