

HOW CAN I TELL IF I HAVE DENTAL PROBLEMS?

Early signs of tooth decay or gum disease include:

- X Pain while chewing**
- X Changes in the way your teeth fit together when you chew**
- X Constant bad breath or bad taste**
- X Pain when eating hot or cold foods**
- X Red, puffy or bleeding gums**

If you have any of these symptoms – don't wait!
See a dentist soon before the problem gets worse. You may still avoid losing your teeth.

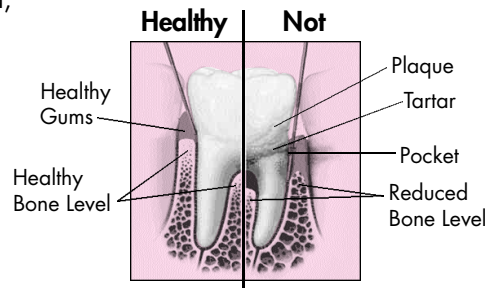
If any of your teeth are loose or falling out, you may already have mid- or late-stage dental disease. See a dentist right away!



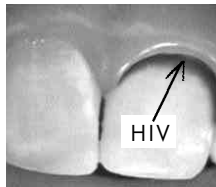
Got other questions about crystal and your health?
Call NEON 622-6925

Can tooth decay be reversed?

Yes — but only in its very early stage. In the first phase of tooth decay, minerals in tooth enamel are being lost. If properly treated, these minerals can be restored. But once a cavity has formed, your teeth cannot repair themselves. That's why it's very important to see a dentist as soon as you notice any problems.



Oral Health and HIV



Oral sex is more risky when gums or teeth are not healthy. Bleeding gums, sores, or loose teeth create perfect openings for HIV to get into your bloodstream. Other STDs like gonorrhea, syphilis, and herpes can also be spread this way.

If you are HIV-positive, good oral health is even more important. Simple dental problems may become more serious when your immune system is weak. Most problems that occur in the mouth can be treated. The sooner you treat the problem, the better the results will be.

WHERE TO GO FOR LOW COST DENTAL CARE

PUGET SOUND NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTERS

Routine and emergency dental care for all ages, including exams, x-rays, cleanings, and fillings. More extensive procedures and oral surgery available, but limited. Sliding fee scale, minimum \$25 per visit. Medicare, medical coupons, and private insurance accepted. Call for appointment or follow steps below for emergency walk-in (first come, first served).

Central Area Dental Clinic / 2101 E Yesler Way / **461-7801**
M-Th 7:15am – 6pm / Walk-ins start at 7:15am

Georgetown Dental Clinic / 6200 13th Avenue S / **461-6943**
M-F 7:15am – 6pm / Walk-ins sign up by 7:15am

**A new dental clinic will be opening in Southeast Seattle by the end of 2000. Call 461-6981 for more details.

AIDS CARE ACCESS PROJECT (ACAP) 284-9277 or 1-800-577-4023

M-F 8am – 5pm

For HIV-positive clients only. Provides dental referrals and enrollment in special dental coverage plans. If you don't have dental insurance and don't exceed monthly income limits, you probably qualify. Call for an updated list of dentists and services available in King County.

!!WARNING!! DO NOT GO TO THE DENTIST HIGH!

The combination of crystal, cocaine and other stimulants with dental painkillers can be dangerous or even fatal!

This includes "local" anesthesia and nitrous oxide (laughing gas). **DO NOT USE BEFORE SEEING YOUR DENTIST!** If you are still high when you go — tell your dentist right away so you can be treated safely.

Available in alternate formats

Rev. 9/00

OPEN WIDE!



Meth and Your Mouth

METH AND YOUR MOUTH

You may already know how crystal affects different parts of your body. But did you know that crystal can also cause serious problems inside your mouth? Bleeding gums, sore jaws and loose teeth can really be a drag — and be pretty painful! Here's what happens...



Crystal shrinks blood vessels, even the ones in your mouth. When blood vessels shrink, they can't carry enough blood to feed your teeth and gums properly. This causes dental tissue to starve and break down. The end result is tooth decay, gum problems and bone loss.

Crystal causes dry mouth. So do other street and prescription drugs. Saliva breaks down acids in the mouth. Without enough saliva, acids build up and away at more tooth enamel.

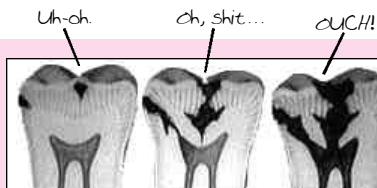
Crystal users often crave and eat a lot of sugar. Unfortunately, these sugar and food particles provide food for bacteria. That means more acid will be produced.



Do you grind your teeth when you're high? If your jaw is sore when you come down, you probably do. This grinding puts a lot of unnatural pressure on teeth. Small fractures can form and teeth can become loose.



When you're high or coming down, you may forget to brush and floss your teeth every day. Brushing and flossing get rid of leftover food particles and bacteria that cause tooth decay.



What is tooth decay?

Tooth decay is caused by bacteria that live in the mouth. They cling to the teeth and form a sticky, clear film called *plaque*. These bacteria feed on tiny pieces of food left on the teeth. Then they produce acids that dissolve the minerals on the outer layer of teeth. This surface is also called *enamel*. Over time, the enamel will weaken and a hole, or *cavity*, will form.

Some types of plaque can also cause **gum disease**. At first, gums become red and swollen and bleed easily. Without treatment, the infected gums will pull away from the teeth. This allows infection to spread to the bone below. As bone gets eaten away, teeth will loosen and fall out.

SO WHAT CAN I DO?

Using crystal doesn't always mean losing teeth! You can save your teeth and avoid painful dental problems! Here's how:

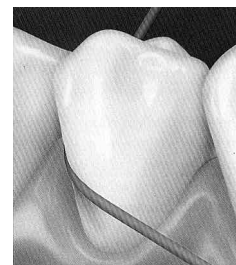


Plan for dental care before you get high. Leave yourself a reminder note to brush and floss. Keep an extra toothbrush and travel size toothpaste in your backpack if you think you'll be away from home.

Brush your teeth daily. Use a soft bristle brush and toothpaste that contains fluoride. Fluoride is the best defense against tooth decay.



Brush Daily



Floss Regularly

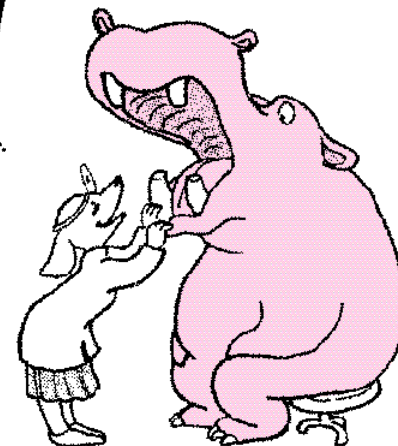
Floss your teeth on a regular basis. But don't floss right before or after oral sex. This might cause your gums to bleed and increase your risk for HIV or STDs.

Check your teeth and gums often for early signs of decay and gum disease.



Dammit! My gums are gorgeous!! Someone's gettin' lucky tonight...

Drink lots of water to keep your mouth moist. Especially when you're high, drink at least 8 glasses of water a day. Stay away from high-sugar drinks like soda.



See a dentist every six months for a routine cleaning and check-up.

Sucking on sugar-free candy like lemon drops helps produce saliva.