

# THE DUBOWSKY DENTAL DIALOGUE

email: [scottd3811@gmail.com](mailto:scottd3811@gmail.com)

website: [www.drdubowsky.com](http://www.drdubowsky.com)

## New Ways of Fighting Dental Disease

If you've been to our office, you probably have heard me tell you, "You don't have to floss all of your teeth, just the one's you want to keep!" While this adage still holds, there are some

new weapons available to help fight tooth decay and gum disease. The big news about these products is that they are available to you to buy on your own and don't need a prescription.



The first product is xylitol. It is an alcohol sugar

and as such does not metabolize like regular sugar. Clinical studies have shown that it is safe for diabetics, has fewer calories, and it inhibits plaque formation on teeth so that it inhibits tooth decay. Many sugarless gums and candies are made with xylitol. Xylitol can also be bought in granulated form in health food stores and other outlets.

While xylitol is not toxic, all alcohol sugars can have a laxative effect so you can "overdo" it.

The other product of interest is a whole new class of remineralizing toothpastes. In the coming months there will be a number of competitive products that will hit the market. While the science and technology concerning the development of these products does differ, they are all based on the notion of getting calcium phosphate back into tooth enamel. The exciting notion here is the process which starts tooth decay can, in the early stages, be reversed with the proper application of these pastes.

Sensodyne's Pro-Enamel was one of the first products to hit the market but it also has other ingredients which may not be suitable for all patients. Arm & Hammer's Enamel Care toothpaste and Trident Gum with Recaldent also have this new technology.



All of these products have great potential but also have limitations. Before purchasing these products don't hesitate to contact us and ask how, when, and in what quantity these products should be used for maximum effectiveness.

# Tooth Erosion

## How acid reflux disease damages teeth

First reported more than 200 years ago, dental erosion still continues to be a major concern for dentists and consumers. Twenty decades ago, studies reported dental erosion occurred because of industrial hazards, specifically when workers were exposed to acidic aerosols. In recent years, everyday foods and drinks such as lemons, pickles, sodas and sugary, starchy goods have been associated with tooth erosion. People now also need to be aware of another danger that causes permanent and severe loss of tooth structure, acid reflux-induced erosion, a condition that occurs when stomach contents reflux into the mouth, according to a study that appeared in the March/April 2009 issue of *General Dentistry*, the Academy of General Dentistry's (AGD) clinical, peer-reviewed journal.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, more than seven million people suffer from severe acid reflux. However, David Lazarchik, DMD, lead author of the study notes that, "patients often are not aware of the damage that reflux-induced erosion has caused to their teeth until it has reached an advanced stage of destruction."

The potential of hydrogen, or pH, is a standard way to measure the acidity of a substance. It is measured on a scale of 0 to 14. A lower pH means that a solution contains more acid. The higher the pH, the more alkaline (or non-acidic) the solution. "Dental enamel begins to dissolve at a pH of 5.5," says Dr. Lazarchik. "Because stomach acid has an extremely low pH of 2.0, it has the potential to cause significant chemical erosion."

Certain foods, beverages and habits are known to cause acid reflux and as preventive measure, individuals should be aware of the products they consume. Spicy, fatty, fried foods, citric fruits and beverages and dairy products can lead to acid reflux.

In addition to taking the steps necessary to establish a healthier eating lifestyle, AGD Vice President, Fares Elias, DDS, FAGD, says, "When visiting a general dentist, it's important to make him or her aware of any medical conditions and medical history in general." "In some cases, other medical conditions, not directly related to your oral health, may be the cause for problems associated in the mouth," says Dr. Elias, who has also experienced acid reflux. "Treating reflux-induced erosion without treating and preventing the medical condition that causes the erosion may only lead to more severe problems for your oral health in the future."