

# A

<b>ABRASION</b>	Removal of tooth structure due to rubbing and scraping (e.g. incorrect brushing method)
<b>ABSCESS</b>	A collection of pus. Severe decay, periodontal disease, or trauma are causative factors. It is characterized by swelling and pain. If an abscess ruptures, it will be accompanied by sudden relief from pain due to a reduction in pressure. A foul taste may also be noticed. Treated with antibiotics and possibly a root canal.
<b>ABUTMENT</b>	A tooth or tooth structure which is responsible for the anchorage of a bridge or a denture. The teeth on either side of a missing tooth.
<b>ADJUSTMENT</b>	A modification made upon a dental prosthesis after it has been completed and inserted into the mouth.
<b>ALGINATE</b>	An impression material used for making stone models.
<b>ALVEOLUS</b>	An opening in your jaw-bone in which a tooth is attached. The tooth socket.
<b>AMALGAM</b>	A silver/mercury mixture which is used for fillings.
<b>ANESTHETIC</b>	An agent that causes temporary loss of sensation/feeling.
<b>ANTERIOR</b>	The front position. An adjective used to describe things pertaining to your Centrals, laterals and cuspids (your front teeth).
<b>APEX</b>	The very bottom of the root of your tooth
<b>ARCH</b>	A curvature; both the maxillary and mandibular ridges form a horseshoe shaped arch.
<b>ARTICULATING PAPER</b>	Carbon paper; placed between the upper and lower teeth to mark contact.
<b>ARTICULATOR</b>	A mechanical device used to replicate functional movements of the jaw to casts.
<b>ATTRITION</b>	Wear of teeth due to activities such as chewing.

## B

<b>BICUSPIDS</b>	Having two cusps. The first and second bicuspids; they are the fourth and fifth teeth from the center of the mouth, respectively.
<b>BITE</b>	The way the mouth closes, or the way in which the upper and lower teeth meet.
<b>BITEWING</b>	A kind of dental x-ray which is taken with the teeth biting together. The main function of this kind of x-ray is to detect cavities in between teeth and height of bone support.
<b>BLEACHING</b>	Whitening of teeth using peroxide. The over-the-counter whitening products are not prescription strength and are therefore less effective.
<b>BRIDGE</b>	A prosthesis which is fixed inside the mouth to replace missing teeth.
<b>BRUXISM</b>	Involuntary, "nervous" grinding of the teeth while the patient is asleep. Can eventually cause headaches, TMD, loss of tooth surface and cracking. Treatment includes a nightguard custom-made from impressions made of the patient's teeth.
<b>BUCCAL</b>	The tooth surface which is next to your cheek. Usually only posterior teeth touch your cheeks, so people usually use the term "buccal" only when talking about your back teeth.

## C

<b>CALCULUS</b>	A hard deposit that forms when you do not brush your teeth, so the plaque hardens. Calculus is also known as tartar.
<b>CANAL</b>	The narrow chamber inside the root of a tooth that contains nerve tissue and blood vessels.
<b>CANINE</b>	The third tooth from the middle of the jaw. There are 4 of them. They are typically the longest teeth in humans.
<b>CANKER SORE</b>	An ulceration with a yellow base and red border in the mouth. It can be caused by trauma or herpes simplex virus.
<b>CARIES</b>	Another name for a cavity (tooth decay)

<b>CAVITY</b>	A small hole in one of your teeth caused by tooth decay.
<b>CAST</b>	A model of teeth.
<b>CEMENTATION</b>	The process of "gluing" the appliance/prosthesis on the associated area.
<b>CEMENTUM</b>	A bony substance covering the root of a tooth.
<b>CERVICAL</b>	Pertaining to the neck of a tooth.
<b>CHLORHEXIDINE</b>	An anti-microbial agent. It is available in many forms such as gels and rinses. It is an effective agent in controlling gum diseases.
<b>CLASP</b>	A metal arm that extends from a removable partial denture. It holds on to natural tooth structure and thus provides anchorage for the denture.
<b>COLD SORE</b>	An ulcer or blister on the lip. A form of herpes simplex.
<b>COMPOSITE</b>	White filling.
<b>CROSS-BITE</b>	An abnormal bite relationship of the upper and lower jaw. The lower teeth align toward the check side more than the upper teeth.
<b>CROWN</b>	The part of your tooth above your gum.
<b>CROWN (PORCELAIN/ACRYLIC/GOLD)</b>	A crown is almost like a "cap" on a tooth. It covers the tooth partially or totally above the gum to restore its function and outlook.
<b>CURETTAGE</b>	A periodontal procedure where your gums are scraped to remove bacteria.
<b>CUSP</b>	The chewing or tearing points of the cuspids, bicuspid, and molars.
<b>CUSPID</b>	The third tooth from the center of the mouth towards the back, also known as canine.
<b>CUSTOM TRAY</b>	An individual tray custom made to fit a patient's mouth.

# D

- DEBRIDEMENT** Treatment of a bacterial infection by removing irritants (bacteria, calculus) from the periodontal pocket so as to allow healing of adjacent tissues.
- DECALCIFICATION** The loss of calcium from your teeth. This weakens your teeth and makes them more susceptible to decay
- DECAY** The rotten part of the tooth.
- DECIDUOUS TEETH** Baby teeth; teeth that exfoliate or shed. see PRIMARY TEETH.
- DEMINERALIZATION** Loss of mineral from tooth enamel just below the surface in a carious lesion; usually appearing as a white area on the tooth surface.
- DENTIN** The calcium part of a tooth below the enamel containing the pulp chamber and root canals.
- DENTIPATCH** An adhesive strip applied by the dentist to the gum to prevent pain of the local anesthetic injection.
- DENTITION** The position, type, and number of teeth in the upper and lower jaw.
- DENTURE (IMMEDIATE/COMPLETE/PARTIAL) (OVERDENTURE, TEMPORARY)** An artificial object to replace missing teeth and their neighboring structures. There are many different types of dentures to satisfy different treatment requirements and patient preferences.
- DESENSITIZATION** A procedure to reduce the sensitivity of teeth.
- DIAGNOSIS** The process of identifying dental disease.
- DIAGNOSTIC** Procedures performed by the dentist to identify what's going on in the mouth.
- DIASTEMA** A wide space in between two adjacent teeth. Usually refers to the front teeth.
- DISINFECTANT** A chemical agent which is applied onto inanimate surfaces, for example chairs, to destroy germs.

**DISINFECTION** A cleaning process which destroys most microorganisms, but not highly resistant forms such as bacterial and mycotic spores or the AIDS virus.

**DISTAL** A direction indication in the mouth. Towards the back of the mouth. It indicates the direction away from the middle of the jaw. For example you might say that the first bicuspid is distal to the cuspid.

## E

**EDENTULOUS** No teeth.

**EMPRESS** Type of porcelain crown and porcelain veneer/laminate. The advantage of Empress is that it blends very nicely with the surrounding teeth; it is very esthetic.

**ENAMEL** A hard ceramic-like substance which covers the exposed part of your teeth.

**ENDODONTICS (ENDO)** A department of dentistry involving the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of the dental pulp (the nerves and blood vessels inside the tooth).

**ENDODONTIST** A dentist who specializes in root canals and the treatment of diseases or injuries that affect the root tips or nerves in your teeth.

**EROSION** The dissolution of tooth structure due to the presence of gastric juices or citrus. Erosion seldom occurs alone; it is often accompanied by attrition or abrasion (or both) to varying degrees. Acidic foods, such as citrus fruits and juices should be avoided in patients with signs of erosion.

**ERUPT, ERUPTION** When a new tooth comes in, the tooth is said to erupt when the tooth breaks through the surface of your gums, so you can see the tooth in your mouth.

**EXCISION** The action of cutting something off.

**EXFOLIATE** To fall out. (Your Deciduous teeth exfoliate and permanent teeth erupt into the space.)

**EXPLORER** A probe used to detect cavity growth.

<b>EXTRACTION</b>	The removal of teeth.
<b>EXTRAORAL</b>	Outside of your mouth
<b>F</b>	
<b>FACIAL</b>	The surface next to the face; the outer surface of a tooth resting against the lips.
<b>FILLING</b>	A restoration placed in a tooth to restore its function and appearance.
<b>FILTRUM</b>	The dimple or indentation under the nose directly above the upper lip.
<b>FISTULA</b>	An abnormal passage (tract) formed in the gum tissue through which an abscessed tooth drains.
<b>FLIPPER</b>	A temporary denture to replace missing teeth during the waiting period for long term treatment.
<b>FLOSS</b>	A thread/tape which goes in between teeth for cleaning.
<b>FLUORIDE</b>	A compound of fluorine (an element) which can be put in different forms such as water, gels, and rinses to strengthen the teeth.
<b>FLUORIDE TREATMENT</b>	Teeth treated with fluoride agents like gel or rinse. It helps to prevent tooth decay.
<b>FLUOROSIS</b>	Discoloration of the enamel due to excessive fluoride absorption (greater than one part per million) into the bloodstream, also called enamel mottling.
<b>FRAMEWORK</b>	A metal skeleton of a removable partial denture to support the false teeth and the plastic attachments.
<b>FRENUM</b>	Small pieces of pink colored skin that attach your lips, cheeks and tongue to your mouth. Examples include the piece of skin under your tongue which sticks out when you pick up your tongue, and the piece of skin which sticks out when you pull out your lips.
<b>FURCATION</b>	An area where the root divides.

# G

**GINGIVA** Another name for your gums.

**GINGIVAL HYPERTROPHY**

The abnormal enlargement of the gingiva surrounding the teeth caused by poor oral hygiene.

**GINGIVECTOMY** The removal of soft tissue surrounding the tooth; typically used in the treatment of periodontal disease.

**GINGIVITIS** The mildest form of gum disease: inflammation of the gums. The earliest sign is bleeding gums. Inflamed and swollen gum tissue most commonly caused by plaque buildup. If left untreated, may lead to periodontitis.

**GUMS** The pink areas around your teeth

**GUTTA PERCHA** Material used in the filling of root canals.

# H

**HALITOSIS** Bad breath

**HANDPIECE** The instrument used to hold and revolve burs in dental operations.

**HEAT-STERILIZING** Use of an autoclave or dry-heat sterilizer to kill all potential disease-causing agents that remain following patient treatment. Any instrument that is not heat stable and cannot tolerate high temperatures should be thoroughly cleaned and soaked in disinfectant chemicals.

**HEMORRHAGE** Bleeding

**HOMEOSTASIS** Stop bleeding.

**HYPERSENSITIVITY** A sharp, sudden painful reaction in teeth when exposed to hot, cold, chemical, mechanical or osmotic (sweet or salt) stimuli.

# I

**IMMEDIATE DENTURE** A complete or partial denture made before the natural teeth are extracted.

**IMPACTED TOOTH** An unerupted tooth that has gotten stuck underneath the bone or another tooth and cannot come in.

**IMPLANT** A replacement for one or more of your missing teeth. The implant is different than a bridge in that the implant is permanently attached into your jaw. The implant consists of three parts: a titanium “screw”, an abutment, and the crown which fits over the abutment.

**IMPRESSION** A mold taken by some jelly-like material loaded on a tray.

**INCISAL** The biting edge of your centrals and laterals.

**INCISOR** The four upper and lower front teeth.

**INLAY** A restoration (usually gold, composite or porcelain) fabricated in the lab and cemented in the tooth like a missing puzzle piece. It helps to restore the normal function and outlook of the tooth.

**INTERPROXIMAL** The space between adjacent teeth

**INTRAORAL** Inside your mouth. For example, matrix bands are called intraoral products since the bands are designed to go in your mouth.

**IRRIGATION** The technique of using a solution to wash out your mouth and to flush debris.

# L

**LABIAL** Relating to the lip; another name for the facial surface of anterior teeth (next to the lip).

**LAMINATE VENEER** A porcelain, or composite covering which is bonded to restore discolored, or damaged teeth.

**LINGUAL** The side of the tooth towards the tongue.

**LOCAL ANESTHESIA** Relieves the sensation of pain in a localized area.

## M

**MANDIBLE** The lower jaw

**MANDIBULAR** Pertaining to the lower jaw

**MARGIN** The point at which prepared tooth structure ends and unprepared tooth begins. The junction between a crown and the tooth.

**MARYLAND BRIDGE** A type of Bonded Bridge. Its main difference from conventional bridges is in the reduced amount of abutment preparation necessary. Only the lingual surfaces of the abutments are reduced.

**MASTICATION** Chewing.

**MAXILLA** The upper jaw

**MAXILLARY** Pertaining to the upper jaw

**MESIAL** The side of the tooth towards the middle of the jaw.

**MIDLINE** A plane through the very center of your mouth parallel to the long axis of the nose.

**MIXED DENTITION** The situation when both deciduous and permanent teeth are present.

**MOLAR** The last 3 upper and lower teeth on both side of the mouth.

**MOUTHGUARD** A device to be worn in the mouth. Depending on the design, it prevents injury of the teeth and/or jaw during teeth grinding or sport events.

**MUCOSA** The thin, outer pink or red membrane lining the inside of the oral cavity.

## N

**NIGHTGUARD** A mouthguard which is worn at night time.

# O

<b>OBTURATE</b>	To fill a root canal
<b>OCCLUSAL</b>	The biting surface of the back teeth.
<b>OCCLUSAL PLANE</b>	The imaginary surface on which the upper and lower teeth meet.
<b>OCCLUSAL TRAUMA</b>	Results from excessive force placed on a normal dentition, i.e. grinding and clenching of teeth. If left uncontrolled, occlusal trauma may result in rapid attachment loss and bone destruction.
<b>OCCLUSION</b>	The way the upper and lower teeth close together.
<b>ONLAY</b>	A restoration which covers the entire biting surface of a tooth.
<b>OPEN BITE</b>	The situation in which the upper teeth are not able to contact the opposing lower teeth.
<b>ORAL CAVITY</b>	The mouth.
<b>ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON</b>	Treats and surgically corrects diseases, injuries and defects of the mouth and jaws.
<b>ORAL SEDATION</b>	Any substance taken orally (i.e., a pill or liquid) to reduce anxiety and relax the patient. Used in conjunction with some form of anesthesia during dental procedures.
<b>ORTHODONTICS</b>	A special field in dentistry which involves diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of bite abnormalities or facial irregularities.
<b>OVER BITE</b>	The overlap of upper teeth and lower teeth when they close together.
<b>OVERHANG</b>	The portion of filling material that hangs beyond the border of the cavity.

# P

<b>PA</b>	See PERIAPICAL.
<b>PALATE</b>	The roof of the mouth.

**PANORAMIC RADIOGRAPH (PANOREX)**

An x-ray film used to obtain the wide view of the upper and lower jaws and their associated structures.

**PARTIAL DENTURE**

A removable appliance that replaces some of the teeth in either the upper or lower jaw.

**PEDODONTIST (PEDO)**

A dentist who specializes in the treatment of children's teeth.

**PERFORATION** An opening in a tooth or other oral structure.

**PERIAPICAL** The surrounding area at the bottom of the root of a tooth. An x-ray of this area of individual teeth or groups of teeth.

**PERIAPICAL ABSCESS** Infection of the pulp of the tooth and tissues surrounding the base of the tooth.

**PERICORONITIS** Infection of the tissue overlying a partially erupted tooth. Treatment involves keeping this tissue clean and free of bacteria.

**PERIODONTAL** Pertaining to your gums and the supporting tissues of the teeth. For example periodontal disease is gum disease.

**PERIODONTAL CHARTING** Measures the pocket depth resulting from attachment loss between the gums and teeth.

**PERIODONTAL LIGAMENT** The fibers which suspend the tooth in the bony socket; it is attached at one end to the cementum, and at the other end to the alveolar bone of the socket.

**PERIODONTAL MAINTENANCE** Cleaning of the teeth following periodontal treatment includes periodontal charting.

**PERIODONTAL POCKET** The pocket that forms when the gums lose attachment from the teeth.

**PERIODONTAL PROBE** A dental instrument used to measure pocket depth.

**PERIODONTICS** A specialty of dentistry involved in diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of the supporting unit of teeth, specifically the gums and bone.

- PERIODONTITIS** A form of periodontal disease affecting adults resulting in destruction of alveolar bone.
- PERIODONTIUM** The structures that surround and support the teeth.
- PERMANENT DENTITION** See PERMANENT TEETH.
- PERMANENT TEETH** Adult teeth. The first permanent tooth usually comes in around 6 years old.
- PIN** A piece of "nail-like" metal. It usually is used for better retention of a filling.
- PLAQUE** A white, sticky substance containing acids and bacteria that causes tooth decay.
- POLISH** A process to make the tooth, filling, or denture smooth and glossy.
- PONTIC** The false tooth in a bridge or denture to replace the missing tooth.
- PORCELAIN VENEER** Ultra-thin shells of ceramic material bonded to the front of the tooth.
- POST** A big pin which can be made with different materials such as metal, fiber or carbon. Its function usually is to support a big buildup on a tooth.
- POSTERIOR** An adjective used to describe things pertaining to the back of your mouth or your back teeth.
- POSTERIOR TEETH** The back teeth (Bicuspid and molars).
- PRE-AUTHORIZATION**  
An approval from the particular authority (usually insurance company in dentistry) before any action (treatment) is carried out.
- PRE-MEDICATION** Medication that needs to be taken before treatment. Usually applies to patients who have mitral valve prolapse with regurgitation or who have had a recent joint replacement.
- PREMOLAR** The two teeth located in front of the molar.
- PRESCRIPTION** A written statement (from a doctor to a pharmacist) regarding the type, the amount and direction of the use of a medication for a

patient. In dentistry, prescription can also be a written statement on the preparation of an appliance from a dentist to a lab technician

**PRIMARY TEETH** Baby teeth.

**PROCERA** Procera is a type of Porcelain Crown. They are one of the strongest all-porcelain crowns available. Procera's framework is computer generated; porcelain is then added to the structure.

**PROPHYLAXIS/PROPHY**

The procedure of teeth polishing. It also means the prevention of diseases.

**PROSTHESIS** An artificial part to replace missing teeth and their associated structures.

**PROSTHODONTICS** A specialty of dentistry involved in diagnosis, treatment planning, and fabrication of artificial parts to replace missing teeth and their associated structures.

**PROXIMAL** Refers to the surfaces of teeth that touch the next tooth; the space between adjacent teeth is the interproximal space.

**PULP** The soft inner structure of a tooth, consisting of nerve and blood vessels

**PULP CHAMBER** The very inner part of your tooth containing nerve cells and blood vessels.

**PULPECTOMY** The removal of the whole pulp inside a tooth.

**PULPOTOMY** The removal of the top part of the pulp inside a tooth.

## Q

**QUADRANT** Denotes one of four equal sections in the mouth. The upper right, upper left, lower right or the lower left.

## R

**RADIOGRAPH** An x-ray picture.

**RCT** See ROOT CANAL THERAPY.

**REBASE** Process where only the tissue surface of a denture is replaced by new material.

**RECALL** The regular checkup and teeth cleaning appointment.

**RECEMENTATION** The process of "gluing" the appliance/prosthesis back on the associated area.

**RESORB** To dissolve into the tissue.

**RESTORATION** An item a dentist uses to restore the normal function of a tooth or an area in the mouth. It can be a filling, a crown, a bridge, etc.

**RETAINER** A device used for maintaining the position of teeth in the jaw in orthodontic treatment.

**RETREATMENT** The process of repeating the root canal treatment.

**ROOT** The bottom part of a tooth. It anchors the tooth to its supporting units.

**ROOT CANAL** The canal that runs inside the root of the tooth. It contains the nerves and blood vessels inside the tooth.

**ROOT CANAL TREATMENT**  
A treatment which removes the infected pulp from the root canal inside the tooth.

**ROOT PLANING** The action of cleaning the root area of teeth.

**ROOT RESECTION** The removal of the root of a tooth while retaining the crown.

**RUBBER DAM** A rubber sheet that fits around teeth. It isolates the treatment area from the rest of the oral cavity.

## **S**

**SCALING** The action of cleaning of teeth below the gumline.

**SEALANT** A thin layer of plastic-like material that covers the grooves and pits on a tooth to prevent cavity formation.

**SEDATION** The use of medication to calm down a patient.

**SLOUGHING** A condition in which the gingival tissue deadens and peels away from the living tissue.

**SOCKET** A cavity in the bone, see ALVEOLUS.

**SOFT PALATE** The back 1/3 of the roof of the mouth composed of soft tissue.

**SONICARE** Electric toothbrush. Vibrates at over 31,000 brush strokes per minute. Most models offer a 2-minute timer to let you know when you're done.

**SPACE MAINTAINER**

An appliance to maintain the space in between teeth when a primary tooth is prematurely lost.

**SPLINT**

An appliance or a material to prevent movement of a mobile tooth.

**STAIN, EXTRINSIC**

Stain located on the outside of the tooth surface originating from external substances such as tobacco, coffee, tea or food; usually removed by polishing the teeth with an abrasive prophylaxis paste.

**STAIN, INTRINSIC**

Stain originating from the ingestion of certain materials or chemical substances during tooth development, or from the presence of caries. This stain is permanent and cannot be removed.

**SUPERNUMERARY TEETH**

Some people have extra teeth. These are called "supernumerary teeth".

**T**

**TARTAR**

Another name for calculus

**TEMPROMANDIBULAR JOINT (TMJ)**

The joint that links two jaws.

**THIRD MOLAR**

See WISDOM TOOTH.

**TMD**

Tempromandibular disorder; a problem with the joint that connects the lower jaw with the skull. Typically associated with a pop and pain in the joint.

**TOPICAL**

Applied directly to an infected area for treatment.

**TORUS** An outgrowth of bone. It usually develops on the roof of the mouth or around the premolar area on the lower jaw.

## U

**ULTRASONIC** The conversion of high frequency electrical current into mechanical vibrations.

**UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS** These precautions require all dental staff involved in patient care to use appropriate protective wear, such as gloves, masks and eyewear. After each patient visit, the gloves must be discarded, hands washed and a new pair of gloves donned for the next patient. These precautions are considered universal because they are used for each and every patient to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases.

## V

**VENEER** A layer of tooth-colored material (can be porcelain or composite) bonded to the front of the tooth. It is usually for better outlook of the tooth.

**VENTRAL** The underside; used when speaking of the tongue; thus the ventral surface of the tongue is the underside of the tongue.

**VIRGIN TEETH** Teeth that are free from decay or restorations.

## W

**WHITENING** A process of whitening teeth that uses special compounds usually containing hydrogen peroxide.

**WISDOM TOOTH** The eighth (also the last tooth) tooth from the middle of the jaw.

## X

**XEROSTOMIA** Dry mouth