

## Do you know about the “3 Ways”?

Besides the circumstances of trauma or tumors, there are three ways people get in trouble with their teeth and oral health.

Two of those are infection.

**First is decay.** Decay is bacteria that eat holes in your teeth and make cavities. The bacteria make byproducts that leach the minerals out of a tooth, and then invade and infect the tooth. If decay is not stopped and treated, it will lead weakened hurting teeth and eventually to abscesses.

**The second infection is bacteria that attack the gums,** bone and supporting structures to your teeth. Bacteria that are not sufficiently cleaned off the teeth, especially in between the teeth will make byproducts that cause inflammation and breakdown of the gum tissues. Then the bacteria can invade the gums and begin to cause bone loss. If this is not stopped and treated it will lead to the loosening of teeth and periodontal abscesses.

Worse than that is the fact that periodontal (gum) disease is an overall health risk. It is associated with a wide variety of systemic problems including cardiovascular disease, heart attacks, strokes, preterm births, and even erectile dysfunction in men. Every time you eat or brush your teeth, you are sending millions of bacteria and their inflammatory byproducts directly into your bloodstream. This creates a constant immune challenge for your body, and one doesn't have to be a doctor to know this is not good.

**The third way you can get in trouble with your teeth involves the way the teeth hit together.** The bite, to function properly, must be aligned like a set of gears. If it is not, one gets excessive tooth wear, broken and cracked teeth and even headaches and TMJ problems. These things increase the longer an incorrect bite persists. TMJ, jaw joint, problems can be really debilitating to anyone who suffers from these problems. Fortunately we have developed increasingly sophisticated ways to help people who are suffering from these issues.

It is always better to avoid these problems, or to at least correct them at their early stages. That is what we are here for, and why regular exams and hygiene visits are important.

Likely, we can help you prevent these problems, but if you already have any of these issues, we dentists are here to help you.

John Hackbarth, DDS