

What is a cavity ?

word bank

bacteria, Bedtime, filling, checkups, endings, drinks, office, toothache, drill, acids, layer, hole, healthy, toothpaste

That's the word no one wants to hear at the dentist's _____. A cavity develops when a tooth decays or breaks down.

A cavity is a _____ that can grow bigger and deeper over time. Cavities are also called dental *caries* and if you have a cavity, it's important to get it repaired.

But why would your tooth develop a hole?

The _____ in your mouth make acids and when plaque clings to your teeth, the _____ can eat away at the outermost _____ of the tooth, called the *enamel*.

If you don't go to the dentist, the acids can continue to make their way through the enamel, and the inside parts of your tooth can begin to decay. If you've ever had a _____ or heard an adult complain about one, it may have been because there was a cavity that reached all the way inside a tooth, where the nerve _____ are. Ouch!

Your *dentist* will carefully examine your teeth and may take X-rays.

If your dentist discovers a cavity, he or she can repair it for you by first removing the rotted part of your tooth with a special _____. The dentist then fills the hole in your tooth with a special material. The result is called a _____.

cavity prevention tips

Though cavities can be repaired, try to avoid them by taking care of your teeth.

Here's how:

- Brush your teeth with fluoride _____ after every meal or at least twice a day. _____ is an important time to brush.
 - Brush up and down in a circular motion.
 - Gently brush your gums as well to keep them _____.
 - Floss your teeth once a day to remove plaque and food that's stuck between your teeth.
 - Limit sweets and sugary _____. like soda or juice.
 - See your dentist twice a year for regular _____.
- We hope you'll hear those two wonderful words: "No cavities!"