



# Cavity-Free is the Way to Be!

(How To Prevent Dental Decay 101)





# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
What Causes Cavities in Teeth? .....	4
Cavity Detection (Catching Cavities in Their Tracks!) .....	6
How to Prevent Cavities .....	7
Cavity and Tooth Decay Treatment (When a Cavity Strikes) .....	10
Everyone Deserves a Beautiful, Healthy Smile!.....	12



## Introduction

At Newtown Dentistry, we don't give cavities a fighting chance! In fact, we arm our patients with everything possible to defend against them. From our ultimate and innovative cavity detection devices to a wealth of education and resources on cavity prevention, it's our job to ensure that patients of all ages know how cavities develop, signs a cavity may be present, what you can do to prevent cavities, and how they're treated.

Our board-certified dentists have combined decades of experience and expertise, making Newtown Dentistry a prevention-driven practice when it comes to oral health. In an effort to help you and your family strive for healthy, cavity-free teeth, our dental team has put together this helpful eBook to address everything you need to know about cavities and how to avoid them.

This guide is designed to help prevent cavities in children and adults, and will focus on:

- How cavities develop
- How to tell if you have a cavity
- What professional cavity detection is all about
- How to prevent cavities in children’s teeth (and yours!)
- How dentists treat cavities
- Why adults and families choose Newtown Dentistry

## What Causes Cavities in Teeth?

What is a tooth cavity? This is a common question—and one that our Newtown dentists answer frequently. Essentially, a cavity is a hole that develops in your tooth. This “hole” occurs as the result of erosion of the tooth enamel. This

leads to another popular question: what causes cavities? Over time, the enamel of our teeth is worn down by plaque, a sticky film of bacteria.

Foods and drinks that contain sugar trigger a reaction in bacteria-producing plaque. In-turn, the plaque releases acids that eat away at the tooth enamel—and eventually—create a hole or “cavity in the tooth” (this is also referred to as “dental caries.”)

### What Does a Cavity Look Like?

Initially, a cavity may appear as a white spot. But, left untreated, may look more like a brown or black spot.

### What Are Some Signs of a Cavity?

In addition to actually seeing a white, brown, or black spot on the tooth, additional indications that you may have a cavity include:

- Toothache (that can occur at unpredictable times, and for no known reason)

- Sensitivity in the tooth
- Tooth pain that worsens when eating something hot, cold, or sweet
- Pain in the tooth when biting

**“A cavity is a hole that develops in your tooth.”**

It’s important to note, that even when people do not experience any of the symptoms above, a cavity may still be present! That’s why visiting a dentist who offers cavity detection is important. At Newtown Dentistry, for example, we offer the latest approaches in detecting cavities as well as utilizing progressive and precision diagnostic tools. We’ll discuss more about this in the next section.





## Cavity Detection (Catching Cavities in Their Tracks!)

While traditional dental X-rays (dental radiographs) will reveal the presence of cavities, Newtown Dentistry also utilizes the modern and extremely efficient SOPROLIFE Camera. Using safe, blue LED light, the SOPROLIFE device can detect the earliest stages of dental caries. This advanced technology also makes it possible for your dentist to reduce affecting the healthy tooth structure during the removal of tooth decay.

The CariScreen Caries Susceptibility Test is another newer form of cavity detection. The CariScreen meter test only takes a mere minute to perform and involves absolutely no pain or discomfort. Your dentist simply gathers a minimal amount of plaque from the teeth with a swab. The bioluminescence reagent in the swab interacts with the plaque sample to produce a score between 0-9,999. Anything below 1,500 is a positive result.



## How to Prevent Cavities

There are many things your dentist can do in the office to help you protect from cavities. In addition to offering cavity detection, there are additional dental treatments that safeguard your teeth from cavities. One of the best things you can do to fight cavities and promote positive oral health is to maintain routine professional dental cleanings and checkups. Since only your dentist can detect when a cavity is starting to form, regular appointments increase

the chances of a cavity being caught before it becomes problematic.

Cavity-prevention steps your dentist can help you with include:

- **Fluoride Application**

Certain drinking water sources contain fluoride, and even some of the foods and drinks we consume contain traces of fluoride. Fluoride treatment provided by your dentist, however, is a concentrated form,



usually painted on the teeth as a liquid or gel.

According to the American Dental Association (ADA), fluoride poses little health risk and is especially effective in helping patients prone to tooth decay.

At Newtown Dentistry we also offer qualifying patients silver diamine fluoride (SDF). This type of professionally-applied fluoride contains silver ions, halting cavity development in between 70-90% of treated teeth.

- **Sealants**

Similar to fluoride, dental sealants are completely painless and safe. Made of glass ionomers and composite resin, sealants cover the deep pockets, pits, and fissures of the tooth. Once applied, your dentist uses a dental curing light to “seal” the teeth. According to the ADA, when applied to molars, sealants reduce the risk of cavities by 80%.

- **Xylitol**

Xylitol naturally derives from many fruits and vegetables and

is also often used in sugar-free chewing gums and in certain foods and drinks. And, it has a host of health and dental benefits. Xylitol is beneficial to your oral health by helping prevent tooth decay, reducing plaque build-up on the teeth, protecting tooth enamel from harmful acids, lowers gingival inflammation, and more. It's also safe for children and adults.

## Preventing Cavities with Comprehensive Home Dental Care

Practicing thorough and healthy oral hygiene habits at home is essential in preventing cavities—for adults and children. If you are an adult, we recommend making the following steps a regular part of your oral health practices at home:

- Brush twice daily
- Use a toothpaste containing fluoride
- Clean between your teeth with floss or an interdental cleaner (such as a floss-stick)

- Limit foods that drinks that contain sugar (especially excessive amounts)
- Drink plenty of water
- Try to not snack too much between meals
- Eat healthy fruits and vegetables (especially those containing calcium and Vitamin D) to help keep teeth strong and healthy

If you are a parent helping to prevent your child from developing a cavity, we suggest practicing all the steps above, while also keeping the following factors in mind:

- Don't let your baby or toddler nap or go to sleep at night with a bottle or sippy cup (formula and breast milk both contain sugars that can be harmful to gums and baby teeth)
- Do help toddlers and preschoolers brush and floss their teeth
- Don't allow your child to drink a lot of juice, as it often contains added sugar



## Cavity and Tooth Decay Treatment (When a Cavity Strikes)

Sometimes, even despite best oral hygiene efforts and routine visits to the dentists, cavities happen anyway. And, when they do, our Newtown Dentists are here to help provide the highest-quality treatment. Because of our commitment to anxiety-free dentistry, we go out of our way to ensure that no matter what age you are, that you will be comfortable and relaxed during cavity treatment .

Often, as a result of our comprehensive cavity detection and prevention measures, cavities can be addressed swiftly (occasionally, even before they have fully formed). As we briefly discussed, our SOPROLIFE device can help remove tooth decay in the early stages (with limited interference to the healthy tooth structure).



Before filling a cavity, a local anesthetic (lidocaine) is administered to numb the area being treated. We also offer patients who may be feeling uneasy nitrous oxide—a colorless, odorless gas—to help them feel more at ease during the cavity-filling procedure.

Once the damaged area of the tooth has been removed, your dentist “fills” the space with a tooth-colored material to keep the tooth protected.

Most patients feel little to no pain when having cavity treatment. After the procedure, while your mouth may feel “tingly,” any discomfort can often be addressed with an over-the-counter pain reliever. You will likely be asked to abstain to eat or drink until the anesthesia wears off. We don’t want any of our patients to accidentally bite their cheek or tongue while their mouth is still numb!



# Everyone Deserves a Beautiful, Healthy Smile!

Whether you walk through our doors for cavity detection, prevention, treatment, or for a different dental procedure entirely, Newtown Dentistry believes that everyone deserves to smile. For this very reason, we strive to make every visit an inviting and pleasant experience.

Children have plenty of room to play, can practice their “hand” at being a dentist for one of our puppets, and pick a fun and quality prize at the end of their appointment.

Adults are provided with the flexibility and quality their busy lives demand (and they get to pick prizes too!)

No matter what brings you to Newtown Dentistry, it’s our mission that when you leave, you feel a little better than when you came!

[Schedule an appointment](#) now. Or, to learn more about cavity detection, prevention, and treatment, call us any time for questions at (215) 770-3901.