

PAIN GUIDE

SYMPTOM

POSSIBLE PROBLEM

WHAT TO DO

Momentary sensitivity to hot or cold foods.

If the discomfort lasts only moments, sensitivity to hot and cold foods generally does not signal a serious problem. The sensitivity may be caused by a loose filling or by minimal gum recession which exposes small areas of the root surface.

Try using toothpastes made for sensitive teeth. Brush up and down with a soft brush; brushing sideways wears away exposed root surfaces. If this is unsuccessful, see your general dentist.

Sharp pain when biting down on food.

Dental work may inflame the pulp, or nerves, inside the tooth, causing temporary sensitivity.

Wait four to six weeks. If the pain persists or worsens, see your general dentist.

Lingering pain after eating hot or cold foods.

There are several possible causes of this type of pain: decay, a loose filling or a crack in the tooth. There may also be damage to the pulp tissue inside the tooth.

See a dentist for evaluation. If the problem is pulp tissue damage, your dentist may send you to an endodontist (they are dentists who specialise in pulp related procedures). Your endodontist will perform a procedure that cleans out the damaged pulp, then fills and seals the remaining space. This procedure is commonly called a root 'canal'.

Constant, severe pain and pressure, swelling of gum and sensitivity to touch.

This probably means the pulp has been damaged by deep decay or physical trauma.

See your endodontist to save the tooth with root canal treatment.

Severe, constant, pressure and pain, gum inflammation and sensitivity to touch.

Possible problem: a tooth may have become abscessed, causing the surrounding gum and bone to become infected.

See your endodontist for evaluation and treatment to relieve the pain and save the tooth. Take over the counter analgesics until you see the endodontist.

Dull ache and pressure in upper teeth and jaw.

The pain of a sinus headache is often felt in the face and teeth. Grinding of teeth, a condition known as bruxism, can also cause this type of ache.

For sinus headache, try over the counter analgesic or sinus medicine. For bruxism, consult your dentist. If pain is severe and chronic, see your doctor or endodontist for evaluation.

Chronic pain in head, neck or ear.

Sometimes pulp-damaged teeth cause pain in other parts of the head and neck, but other dental or medical problems may be responsible.

See your endodontist for evaluation. If the problem is not related to the tooth, your endodontist will refer you to an appropriate dental specialist or a doctor.



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