



Dental Dictionary

Abscess	A place in the mouth that is swollen and sore that may be caused by infection in the bone or gums.
Amalgam Filling	Silver colored fillings used to fill holes in teeth caused by decay
Analgesia	A drug given, usually nitrous oxide, to lessen the feeling of pain in a conscious patient.
Anesthesia	A drug given that causes partial or complete elimination of pain sensation. It can be local or general.
Anterior	Front teeth. Includes the canines and the teeth in the center front and the side front of the mouth.
Biopsy	A medical test to remove a small piece of skin, tissue or cells to look for disease.
Bite	The relationship of the upper and lower teeth upon closure (occlusion.)
Braces	Devices (bands, wires, ceramic appliances) put in place by orthodontists to gradually reposition teeth to a more favorable alignment.
Bridge	A custom made false tooth or teeth that is permanently places between two healthy teeth, filling in the area left by a missing tooth or teeth.
Calcium	An element needed for the development of healthy teeth, bones and nerves.
Cavity/caries	A hole in the tooth caused by decay.
Cleaning	The removal of plaque and calculus (tarter) from teeth, generally above the gum line.
Composite Filling	Also called a resin filling. White colored filling used to fill holes in teeth caused by decay.



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Crown	A false tooth, fabricated or made in a lab, used to restore a tooth that has heavy decay, a fracture or a root canal.
Curettage	Gums are scraped below the gum line to remove bacteria left on the teeth.
Decay	The breakdown or destruction of a tooth caused by food and bacteria left on the teeth.
Denture	Also called false teeth. A complete set of either upper and lower teeth. Used when all teeth must be removed due to damage, decay or disease. Dentures are made in a lab.
Extraction	The removal of a tooth.
Fluoride	A gel applied to the surface of teeth after a cleaning is done. Fluoride helps prevent tooth decay by stopping the breakdown of the top layer of the tooth called enamel.
Gingival Flap Procedure	Surgery for gum treatment. The gums are separated from the teeth and folded back to let a dentist reach the root of the tooth and the bone.
Gingivectomy	Surgery for gum disease. Removes and reshapes loose, diseased gum tissue to get rid of pockets between the teeth and gums.
Gingivitis	Redness and swelling of gums that can be caused by improper brushing. Usually the first sign of gum disease.
Impacted tooth	A tooth that is partially or completely blocked from erupting through the surface of the gum. An impacted tooth may push other teeth together or damage the bony structures supporting the adjacent tooth.
Partial Denture	Teeth made in a lab to fill in the spaces made by missing teeth. Keeps other teeth from moving.
Periapical	The area around the tip of a tooth root.
Periodontal	Periodontal disease or gum disease are serious infections that can lead to tooth loss if not treated. The word periodontal means "around the tooth."

