

Glossary

A

Abscess - infection caused by severe tooth decay, trauma or gum disease

Amalgam - a silver and mercury material used for fillings

Anesthetic - a drug used by your doctor to eliminate a patient's localized pain during certain dental procedures

Anterior - the teeth in the front of your mouth

Antiseptic - an agent that can be applied to living tissues to destroy germs

Apex - the very tip of the root of a tooth

Aspirator - a suction device your dentist uses to remove saliva from your mouth

B

Bleaching Agent - a gel used to whiten and brighten teeth

Bonding - a plastic composite painted on the teeth to correct stains or damage

Bridge - one or more artificial teeth attached to your adjacent teeth

Bruxism - the clenching or grinding of teeth, most commonly while sleeping

C

Calculus - the hardened plaque that can form on neglected or prone teeth, commonly known as tartar

Canine - the pointy teeth just behind the laterals

Caries - another name for cavities or decayed teeth

Cavity - a tiny hole in the tooth caused by decay

Central - the two upper and two lower teeth in the center of the mouth

Crown - an artificial tooth or cover made of porcelain or metal
Cuspid - the pointy teeth just behind the laterals, also known as canines

D

Decalcification - the loss of calcium from the teeth

Deciduous Teeth - also called "baby teeth"

Dental Implants - an implant permanently attached to the jawbone that replaces a missing tooth or teeth

Denture - a removable set of artificial teeth

E

Enamel - the hard surface of the tooth above the gum line

Endodontist - a dentist who specializes in root canals and the treatment of diseases and infections of the dental pulp (inner tooth)

Extraction - the removal of a tooth or teeth

F

Filling - a plug made of metal or composite material used to fill a tooth cavity

Fluoride - a chemical solution used to harden teeth and prevent decay

G

Gingivitis - inflammation of gums around the roots of the teeth

Gums - the firm flesh that surrounds the roots of the teeth

I

Impacted Tooth - often occurring with wisdom teeth, it is a tooth that sits sideways below the gum line, often requiring extraction

Incisal - related to incisors (see below)

Incisor - one of the flat, sharp-edged teeth in the front of the mouth

Inlays - a custom-made filling cemented into an unhealthy tooth
Instant Orthodontics - alternative to braces using bonded porcelain veneers or crowns

L

Lateral - these are the teeth adjacent to the centrals

N

Night Guard - a plastic mouthpiece worn at night to prevent grinding of the teeth. Often used to treat TMJ

P

Pedontist - also known as a pediatric dentist, a dentist that specializes in the treatment of children's teeth
Periodontist - a dentist specializing in the treatment of gum disease

Plaque - a sticky buildup of acids and bacteria that causes tooth decay

Posterior Teeth - the teeth in the back of the mouth

Primary Teeth - also known as "baby teeth" or deciduous teeth

Prosthodontist - a dentist specializing in the restoration and replacement of missing teeth or severely damaged teeth

R

Root - the portion of the tooth below your gum line

Root Canal - cleaning out and filling the inside nerve of a tooth that is heavily decayed

S

Sealant - plastic coating applied to teeth to prevent decay. Used most commonly for children

Secondary Teeth - the permanent teeth

Six-Year Molar - commonly known as "the first molar"

Sleep Apnea - a potentially serious disorder in which a sleeping person may stop breathing for 10 seconds or more, often continuously throughout the night

T

Tartar - see calculus TMJ Syndrome - a disorder associated with the joint of the jaw, often caused by a misalignment of or a disparity in upper and lower jaw sizes.

Tooth Whitening - a process designed to whiten and brighten teeth

Twelve-Year Molar - commonly known as "the second molar"

V

Veneer - a plastic, porcelain or composite material used to improve the attractiveness of a stained or damaged tooth