

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### What is a cavity?

A cavity is essentially a hole in your tooth. Cavities are mainly caused by acid that is either introduced to your mouth through acidic food/drink (soda, fruit, candy) or produced in your mouth by plaque germs that are not properly removed from your teeth (plaque turns to acid when left on teeth too long). The acid wears away at your enamel, causing it to decay. Eventually this decay can get big enough so that it affects the tooth structure beneath your enamel called dentin. When the dentin becomes affected, your teeth become sensitive or even painful.

### What is a filling and why did I need one?

A filling can be made of different materials including plastic, metal, glass ionomer or hybrids of the above. Whichever type of filling is used, the purpose remains the same. Dr. Butler needs to remove the active decay from your natural tooth structure and fill in the area with one of the materials described above where the decay has left the hole or cavity. This will prevent the cavity from getting bigger and hopefully save you from being in pain, save you from possible infection, and save your tooth from having to be extracted.

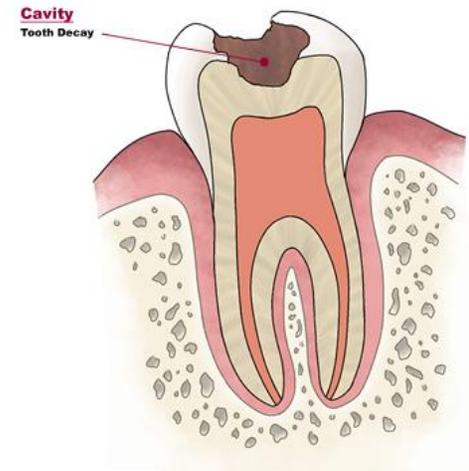
### How can I prevent myself from getting a cavity?

Limit the amount of acidic food and drink you take in. After you do eat or drink something acidic, it would be best to brush your teeth, or at least swish with some water to help return the pH of your mouth to a more neutral state.

Make sure you are doing the best you can with your home hygiene. Brushing twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste, flossing once daily, and you may even want to incorporate a fluoride rinse into your routine.

Make sure you visit your dentist every 6 months to have a cleaning and exam to keep you on the right track and to catch anything small before it gets bigger.

## Post Operative Instructions for DEEP FILLINGS



**4837 Carolina Beach Rd.  
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Wilmington, NC 28412  
(910) 799-9916**

You will be numb for 1-2 hours after leaving the office. Please be careful not to bite your cheek, lips, or tongue. Also, avoid very hot foods and beverages until the numbing has worn off.

□ You have had your cavity filled with composite resin material which has been light cured to bond to your natural tooth structure. You may eat as soon as you'd like, but please avoid chewing ice or candy. These items can fracture even healthy teeth.

□ You have had your cavity filled with a glass ionomer which is being cured with your natural tooth structure chemically over the next 24 hours. Please avoid eating on the side of the mouth where you have this filling. After 24 hours has passed, you can eat as normal. As always, avoid chewing ice or hard candy as these can fracture even healthy teeth.

**TENDERNESS/SENSITIVITY** – It is normal to have some tenderness and/or sensitivity at and around the tooth that has the deep filling. This shouldn't last more than a few days. It is advised to take over the counter *Advil*, *Ibuprofen* or *Tylenol* as directed on the bottle for the first 48 hours after treatment.

***IF TENDERNESS DOES NOT SUBSIDE*** – There are a few reasons why tenderness might last more than a few days.

- 1- When exposed to hot and cold influences the filling material may expand and contract at a slightly different rate to the tooth structure, but this should eventually subside and may only be noticed on occasion.
- 2- The size of the filling may be more than half of your tooth structure. Biting on a filling this large will never be exactly like biting with a healthy tooth. Chewing meat and other tough items should be done with the

side of your mouth that does not have this large filling. If this is your experience, please see info on a custom crown.

- 3- The cavity was too close to the nerve of the tooth causing the nerve to be inflamed. A root canal therapy will have to be performed to relieve pain and prevent infection. Please call the office if you find this to be your experience.

**CROWN** – There is a possibility that the tooth with this large filling will eventually need a custom made crown. Due to the weakened state of the tooth, a crown will support and protect it the best. We advise that at some point down the road you have a custom made porcelain crown placed on this tooth. Please ask one of our financial coordinators for fees and insurance estimates.

**Please follow these home care instructions carefully and call the office at (910) 799-9916 if you have any questions or concerns**