

Tooth Decalcification

Occasionally teeth can become decalcified during orthodontic treatment, which appears as a permanent white discoloration of the tooth surface. Decalcification of the enamel is usually caused by inadequate oral hygiene and/or improper diet during some part of your orthodontic treatment.

Following Dr. Dann's oral hygiene program may help you avoid tooth decalcification. This program includes maintaining regular visits with your dentist every 4-6 months as recommended by your doctor, daily fluoride use, frequent and adequate tooth brushing, flossing, and proper diet. Also, the use of MI Paste Plus, as directed, reduces the potential for decalcification. You should also avoid drinking sodas and drinks containing large amounts of sugar and acids. These types of drinks can produce significant degrees of decalcification on the enamel surface of your teeth. For example: Gatorade, Pepsi, and Coke (to include Diet), Sprite, Orange Juice, Fruit Juices and carbonated drinks. Beverages such as non-carbonated and non-sugar drinks with artificial sweeteners are best (For example: Crystal Light drinks).

After braces are removed Dr. Dann may perform an enamelplasty, which can reduce some of the outer decalcified surface of the damaged tooth. Dr. Dann may also recommend fluoride therapy that may help to reverse some of the existing decalcification. Only 2-3 minutes of Phos-Flur gel containing fluoride worn in clear plastic trays may help to remineralize the damaged enamel. Using the Phos-Flur gel at night for 2-3 minutes with regular toothbrushing before bedtime is also helpful (these trays may also serve as your retainers). The use of MI Paste Plus in the morning and/or evening is also beneficial for the remineralization of tooth enamel. Apply MI Paste after brushing your teeth with your regular toothpaste. Squeeze a small amount of MI Paste on your finger and apply over the surface of your teeth. Leave on teeth 3-5 minutes, then spit out. For maximum benefit, do not rinse with water after application.

Some of the remineralization may occur over several months. After this time, your dentist may need to restore any remaining damaged areas with specific types of cosmetic restorations. Your dentist or orthodontist may elect to whiten your teeth prior to placing these restorations. Conservative tooth whitening procedures often help to lighten the teeth so that the white decalcified areas blend in with the natural tooth surface. It is important that you see your dentist regarding these decalcified areas.

Please feel free to ask Dr. Dann any questions concerning the steps that could be taken to enhance your beautiful smile.

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