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Benefits of Fluoride Varnish Placement Immediately after Hygienist Treatment

Recent dental research has helped us understand one of the most devastating adult dental problems. The problem is known as **root cavities**.

All adults are susceptible to root cavities.

One of the most respected dental researchers in the world says that once you get a cavity on the root surface, "it's like the beginning of the end of your tooth."

You've probably heard about how cavities form, when leftover food particles attract bacteria that "eat away" at the tooth's protective enamel (white part of the tooth) and create cavities. This has the potential to develop into an infection that reaches through the root canals to the bone, which can be extremely dangerous to your health.

Another type of cavity that you may not have heard of is a root cavity, which progresses much more rapidly than a regular cavity. The root is usually covered by layers of enamel and cementum (a very thin mineral layer) to protect it, but untreated cavities erode through the enamel and then quickly through the cementum to reach the root. Usually the gums are an added layer of protection for the root, but gum recession is extremely common among adults, and this recession causes the root to be exposed and susceptible to decay. This can lead to an infection spreading much more quickly to the bone.

Common treatment includes removing the decay and filling the root cavity. However, even after we have removed all of the decay, it often creeps up again right under the filling or the crown as teeth are **always** susceptible to decay. If it recurs, we cut it out further and further, closer to the bone, thereby leaving weak remaining tooth. If the cavity develops deep below the gum line, it may be necessary to perform a surgical procedure to access the cavity.

Thankfully, there are ways we can prevent root cavities! The best prevention for root cavities is **fluoride**, and the best and most effective fluoride delivery is immediately after your cleaning. Within 24 hours of your dental cleaning, you naturally form a sticky film layer that coats your teeth and decreases the ability of the fluoride to penetrate into and protect your teeth, so the best time for application is directly after your professional dental cleaning.

We have had effective fluoride for many years, but they were incredibly acidic and bitter tasting, so most adults refused their usage. Plus the old fluoride systems took long application time, between 5 – 10 minutes in your mouth, fairly intolerable.

We are fortunate today to have **fast-acting, high-strength fluorides** that are extremely effective and taste great and require only 60 seconds. Insurance typically does not cover fluoride for adults, but it's like having your own insurance policy to help insure keeping your natural teeth for life. The charge is a low \$37.00 and we have a great tasting mint flavor.

As an adult, you tend to develop some recession of the gums – it is very common. Often early recession is so small it's not immediately apparent, but recession doesn't have to be visible to put your tooth at risk. That's why you should see us regularly to get your cleanings and make sure we are able to monitor and catch any signs of periodontal disease and gum recession and prevent root cavities from forming.

The Team at Dentistry at Millennium Park