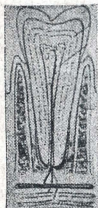


HEALTH AND SAFETY SECTION

THE CARE OF THE TEETH



*Vertical Section
of a Tooth*

It is often said that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This slogan is more nearly true with diseases of the teeth than with almost any other human disease. And yet very few of us really give our teeth the care they should receive.

Many of us do not clean our teeth properly. We do not visit the dentist. And we do not always eat the kind of food that will prevent the decay of the teeth.

A clean tooth will not decay. It is the teeth that are hardest to clean that will decay first. Dental decay is caused by the stagnation of the sugary and starchy foods in the tiny crevices around the teeth. This stagnation leads to a chemical process known as fermentation which results in the formation of an acid.

This acid, called lactic acid, makes its way into the tooth. The surface of the hard protecting substance—the enamel—is destroyed and roughened. Then there is further stagnation and fermentation of food; more of the tooth-injuring lactic acid is formed; and more destruction takes place, until a cavity is produced.

This is the beginning of the end. Before long decay spreads in all directions in the tooth under the enamel. The pulp of the tooth becomes infected and dies. Putrefaction follows and poisons are formed. A part of the poisons formed

escapes into the mouth and mixes with the food and saliva. This poison is finally carried into the digestive tract.

The remaining poisons penetrate through the tooth into the jawbone surrounding the infected tooth and thence directly into the blood stream. The blood stream then carries the poisons to the different vital tissues of the body.

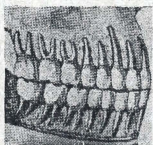
An acute abscess may form. This makes the removal of the ailing tooth necessary. After it is removed, if the person is healthy the remaining germs are destroyed when their source, the infected tooth, no longer supplies poison. If the

person is weak and sickly, the germs may remain in the jawbone for years, and produce more poisons which have no escape except directly into blood stream.

The abscess that forms at the end of a root of a dead tooth or a diseased tooth causes a person no pain or discomfort. The person may not

even know an abscess is there. But just the same the abscess is constantly manufacturing and supplying germs to the blood. Because these germs are sealed up in the bone, they cannot get out. They have to go somewhere, so they slowly destroy the bone until they find their way into the blood stream.

These abscesses are dangerous in another



Teeth in Position



Some of our Teeth

way. They poison the nervous system, for poisons produced by the germs in the abscesses are distributed to the nervous system. In some cases, only a small group of nerves is affected, but sometimes it is the spinal chord or even the brain which is affected.

A well-known dental disease is pyorrhea, which is not a disease of the teeth themselves. If we compare the jawbone to a piece of wood and the teeth to nails driven halfway into the wood, then pyorrhea may be compared to a growth which gets around the nail and rots the wood until the nail becomes loose and falls out.

Pyorrhea creeps into the mouth unnoticed and may have become deeply rooted and have been in progress for some time before its bad effects are noticed. To the eye of the average person, the gums appear normal. But an X-ray photograph may show destruction around the roots of the teeth. With proper and regular brushing of the gums from early childhood, there should be no such thing as pyorrhea.

The teeth should be brushed all over, behind and in front, so that no particles of food will be left adhering to the teeth.

Even with the best of care the teeth are liable to suffer. Let us remember that a healthy condition of the teeth depends to some extent upon the general health of the individual. Even if one takes very good care of the teeth they will be subject to disease if one neglects the general health.

And since dental diseases may develop unnoticed, one should visit a dentist regularly. Whether your teeth bother you or not, it is a good practice to "brush your teeth twice a day and visit your dentist twice a year."

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