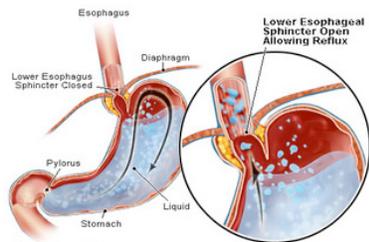


## How GERD causes tooth decay GastroEsophageal Reflux Disease Cause Tooth Decay ?

### GERD stands for GastroEsophageal Reflux Disease

Gastroesophageal Reflux is the backflow of acid and food particles that seep out of the belly and up into the **esophagus**. This happens when the muscle between the esophagus and the stomach, the **lower esophageal sphincter (LES)**, is weak or relaxes when it shouldn't. Also called esophageal reflux or reflux esophagitis.

Almost every person experiences gastroesophageal reflux at some time, commonly known as heartburn, a painful, burning feeling in the chest, much commonly occurring after a meal. But if you have heartburn on a regular basis, it can lead to damage and scarring in the esophagus.



Gastroesophageal Reflux

Frequent heartburn (episodes occurring from several times a week to several times a day) may be connected with a more severe restriction known as Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD). Heartburn is so common that it often is not connected with a serious disease, like GERD.

People of all ages are vulnerable to GERD. GERD may be more common in adults over age 40 but it can occur in infants, in the elderly, and at any age in between. Elderly people with GERD tend to have a more serious fitness than younger people.

### Can GERD Cause Tooth Decay?



The reflux of acid from the stomach back up into the esophagus can ultimately make its way to the mouth. Because this acid is in constant intimate contact with the teeth, it can demineralize or remove layers from them. In general, the enamel on the lingual, or the tongue and palate surfaces of the tooth, is affected rather than the outer or cheek side of the enamel of the tooth. It is also true that patients with GERD experience dry mouth, which intensifies dental bacteria and plaque and can lead to an increase in cavities and decay. Medications that GERD patients take can also dry out the mouth, which contributes to stronger dental plaque. A number of patients say that sucking on breath mints, candies, or lozenges soothes burning in the mouth. Sucking on lozenges can also stimulate saliva production, which helps to fight dry mouth. Beware of mints or sucking candies that contain sugar, as they can also contribute to increased decay.

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