

File Created by [Blogging Rebirth](#) WP Plugin

# Everything You Need to Know About Cavities - Part I

The pain definitely tells us when we have cavities, but few of us understand why we get them. You likely know that poor dental hygiene causes cavities, but do you understand why not brushing or flossing causes cavities?

In order to understand all that's involved in the making of a cavity, you've got to first understand the key players. Those players include saliva, pellicle, plaque and calculus and each resides in the mouth.

Saliva is really important when it comes to protecting teeth and keeping our mouths healthy. Saliva keeps teeth, gums and other tissues inside the mouth lubricated and moist. Saliva helps break food down while eating, and afterwards it washes away some of the bits of food that get stuck on teeth.

Saliva also can neutralize acids which lowers the amount present in the mouth. Interestingly, it can even help protect us against certain viruses and bacteria.

If you've ever noticed a slippery feeling on your teeth right after you brush, that's the result of proteins in saliva called pellicle. Pellicle coat teeth after brushing by absorbing into the surface.

The pellicle gives teeth an extra layer of protection against decay-causing acids. Unfortunately, bacteria and microorganisms can easily attach to the pellicle and this is actually the stage during which plaque begins to develop.

If you were to look at the white sticky substance on your teeth through a microscope, you'd realize that plaque consists of yeast, microorganisms, bacteria, protozoa, mycoplasmas, white blood cells, food particles, body tissues and viruses.

If people realized that, surely they'd do a better job brushing and flossing! Several hours after brushing is when plaque starts to develop and in just one hour, a good amount will accumulate. If left untouched other microorganisms join the mix, thickening the plaque and turning on its destructive powers.

Bacteria are in the mouth too and they're always present in both good and bad form. The good bacteria help us fight colds and other illnesses. The bad intensify the tooth decaying process.

*Streptococcus mutans* is the worst, producing acid while attaching to teeth. *Lactobacillus* only can attach to plaque so it doesn't do quite as much damage. Several other bacteria located inside the mouth contribute to tooth decay and periodontal disease.

To summarize, decay begins when bacteria start attaching themselves to the pellicle. Six or so hours later, plaque begins to form. The bacteria present in your mouth produce acids, and these acids, by throwing the pH balance of your mouth out of balance, cause tooth decay.

In the case of tooth decay, a process called demineralization begins when the pH level inside the mouth drops below 5.5.

Remember, this chain reaction begins the moment you finish brushing your teeth. But brushing is what continually returns the pH level in your mouth back into the range of 6.2 and 7.0, which is considered neutral. That's why brushing and flossing are so important in fighting tooth decay.

Part II will further elaborate on the importance of a neutral pH level in preventing tooth decay.

**[Ed. Note:** Did you know that most commercial oral care products "cover-up" bad breath instead of prevent it? [Learn more here.](#)]

You can also find this article published on [Everything You Need to Know About Cavities - Part I](#)