

Enamel Irregularities

Enamel irregularities are a developmental defect that occurred at the time of tooth development. The scientific term for these teeth are “hypoplastic” or “hypomineralized” teeth.

- **Hypoplastic** means : **missing part of the enamel.**
- **Hypomineralized** means: **normal amount of tooth** structure **but poor quality** of enamel - with the tooth being less mineralized and thus more porous.
- **Both defects lead to discoloration - yellow, brown, and/or mottled white color.**
- There are over 100 different sources identified as causing this disruption in development- thus **finding the actual “cause” is challenging**, if not impossible. Some of the well-known causes include: infections (ear infections, pneumonia, tonsillitis, etc), high fevers, seizures, nutritional deficiencies, and viral infections - when infections occur, the cells that normally lay down the tooth structure (enamel and dentin) start to lay a less mineralized or less dense enamel, giving it a mottled, yellow/brown, or white fleck appearance.
- The poorly formed enamel is more prone to breaking down. The **teeth missing enamel can have rough surfaces that lead to increased food impaction and plaque accumulation.**
- Ultimately these teeth are more prone to developing cavities.

The **severity can vary from mild to severe.**

- **Mild cases often do not need treatment beyond good home care** – keeping the teeth clean, keeping the remaining enamel strong with fluoride and maintaining a healthy diet to limit sugar/acid exposure to the tooth.
- **Severe cases can require more extensive treatment** which could include fillings, bonding, veneers and/or crowns.

