



GREAT SMILES

PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY & ORTHODONTICS

INTERPROXIMAL DECAY

The term *interproximal* means between two adjacent surfaces. Decay found on the smooth surfaces between two teeth is termed interproximal decay. This area is difficult, if not impossible, to visually examine clinically with an explorer. Therefore, dental radiographs are necessary to properly determine if your child has decay.

It is documented that **60-70% of decay on primary (baby) teeth is interproximal** and that **80-90% of decay on permanent teeth is on the biting surface (pits and fissures)**. This is due to the anatomy differences in primary and permanent teeth. It is also well documented that approximately 70% of teeth with interproximal decay have an interproximal decay on the adjacent tooth. In addition, about 90% of children who develop interproximal decay on one side of the mouth will develop it also on the other side of the mouth.

Interproximal decay lesions viewed on a dental radiograph can be classified as incipient, moderate, advanced and severe. Home care should include daily brushing, flossing, fluoride rinse and care with in-between meal snacks and drinks.

INCIPIENT INTERPROXIMAL DECAY

Less than 1/2 the thickness of enamel



Incipient means beginning to exist or appear. An incipient lesion is seen in enamel **only**. Incipient lesions can be called "etching."

Treatment: Monitor

ADVANCED INTERPROXIMAL DECAY

Involves enamel and the DEJ.
Less than 1/2 the distance to the pulp cavity.



Advanced interproximal lesion extends through the dentin, but does not extend into the pulp (nerve). This advanced lesion **affects both enamel and dentin**.

**Treatment: Left side, Resin (white filling)
Right side, Stainless Steel Crown**

SEVERE INTERPROXIMAL DECAY

Dentin is penetrated more than 1/2 the distance to the pulp cavity.



Severe interproximal lesions extend through enamel, dentin, and approximates or enters pulp. May clinically appear as a cavitation (or hole) in the tooth.

Treatment: Stainless Steel Crown and Pulpotomy (nerve treatment) or Extraction and Space maintainer.