

“Meth Mouth” Methamphetamine Use Related to Oral Disease

Use of meth on a routine basis causes a condition known as “meth mouth.” Rampant dental decay is usually present. The reasons for the decay are believed to be:

- Dry mouth caused by the drug and the resultant sticky, thick saliva, which encourages tooth decay.
- The duration of the drug effect ranges up to 12 hours, reducing the patient’s motivation to clean the teeth during that time.
- The drug is acidic, encouraging tooth decay.
- Meth stimulates the desire and craving for high caloric, acidic, carbonated beverages.
- An overall lethargic lifestyle, caused by drug use, which discourages optimum oral hygiene.

Of course, use of methamphetamines or any similar drug is to be strongly discouraged. However, for these persons using meth, who are concerned about the possibility for extreme tooth destruction, the following oral hygiene procedures are suggested:

- Excellent cleaning of teeth at least after breakfast and before bedtime
- Use of fluoride-containing toothpastes
- Flossing between teeth, at least before bed
- Reduced use of sugar-containing carbonated beverages
- Have your dentist provide a tray for your mouth. Using this tray, apply 5000 parts per million fluoride gel in trays applied for 5 minutes twice daily — once after breakfast, and once before going to bed. This dosage of fluoride must be prescribed by a dentist.
- Elimination of the methamphetamine habit as soon as possible