

The summer is here and with it comes the desire to drink ice-cold beverages. As with everything else, water is the best for your teeth. Soda and tea are fine on an occasional basis but water should be the drink of choice. It is easily absorbed by the body and has zero calories. During times of heavy exercise or exertion, sports drinks are good to replace electrolytes and other essentials to help the body recover.

As far as your teeth are concerned, cold drinks and foods can cause discomfort and even pain. Each case is different and sensitivity to cold can even be a sign that a tooth is healthy. When a patient is in my office with complaints of a tooth or teeth sensitive to cold the first question I ask is if the pain throbs or lingers. If the pain on the tooth goes away within 5 seconds after removing the cold food or drink, the tooth is responding in a normal fashion. Even teeth without fillings or cavities are sometimes sensitive to temperature extremes. Sensitive tooth toothpaste and fluoride rinses are common ways to combat this type of sensitivity.

If the pain on the tooth lingers or throbs, even if only for 5 minutes, then this could be the sign of nerve irritation on the inside of the tooth. This occurs rarely after fillings and crowns and needs to be brought to your dentist's attention. In over 90% of these cases the pain is resolved either over time or by adjusting the bite on the new filling or crown. The nerve irritation is reversible. In the other 10% of cases, the irritation will not resolve on it's own and further action is required. The treatment of a diseased and damaged nerve in a tooth is called a root canal. The procedure, though vilified in books and movies, is rarely painful. It gets its bad reputation because it is a very long procedure. The work can take up to three hours to complete and the cost can range from \$500 to \$1,000, depending on the tooth. These cases represent the extreme in tooth sensitivity and, as mentioned before, are rare.

The above gives you some information on tooth sensitivity and causes. As always, this information and your concerns should be discussed with your dental professional. Thanks for taking the time to read our website and your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

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