

## Factsheet

# Non-carious cervical lesions

Tooth structure may be worn away from the tooth just above the gum line. This often occurs on the outside surface of one or more teeth. It is not linked to tooth decay. The wear may be round and smooth or a sharp triangle-shape. It may also look darker than the rest of the tooth. This is called a non-carious cervical lesion.

### Will the wear cause problems?

**Sometimes.**

This tooth wear may lead to sensitivity. In severe cases, it can make the tooth weak. Sometimes tooth decay can develop in this area, but this is rare. Some people may not like how this wear looks if they can see it when they are smiling.

### Do I need treatment?

**Sometimes treatment is needed.**

If the tooth is sensitive, it may be treated with a fluoride gel or paste. Sometimes, a filling may be needed to cover the worn surface. If you are concerned by how the wear looks, a filling can help with this.

### What causes the tooth wear?

**Many factors combine to cause this tooth wear.**

Toothbrushing is suggested as a cause. It can also make it worse, especially brushing after vomiting or reflux, or foods and drinks that make the mouth acidic.

Toothbrushing factors that can affect this wear include:

- how often you brush,
- how hard you brush,
- the choice of a soft, medium or hard bristle toothbrush, and
- how you brush, for example scrubbing hard back and forth.

This tooth wear may be more likely to develop if the gums have pulled away from the teeth. This is called gum recession. This uncovers tooth structure that is easier to wear away.

