

# Abfractions

Abfractions are notches in the tooth structure near, or even under, the gumline, usually on the cheek side of the tooth.

Finding and treating abfractions early can prevent further damage and restore your teeth to beautiful good health.



*The notching of abfraction*



*Bite adjustment*



*Natural-looking restorations*

## The causes of abfraction

All the causes that lead to abfractions are not known, but an important factor is improper forces on teeth. These forces can be caused by a misaligned bite or the grinding and clenching of teeth.

When your bite is slightly off, one tooth may hit sooner than the rest. This causes undue stress on the involved teeth, and they begin to flex. Over time, this continual flexing and stress causes the enamel to separate from the inner dentin layer of the tooth, forming a notch at the gumline. Tooth grinding and clenching also place extra stress on teeth.

## Treating abfraction

Treating the abfraction problem may include two or more steps, such as adjusting the bite, wearing a nightguard, and restoring the tooth.

We may first adjust your bite so that chewing forces are evenly distributed among all your teeth. We may have to adjust only the tooth in question, or we may have to adjust all of the teeth. If tooth grinding or clenching is the problem, we may prescribe a nightguard to absorb those stresses and protect your teeth.

The second phase involves restoring the damage by bonding a filling in place. Tooth-colored fillings can repair the damage and restore the tooth to nearly its original color and shape.