



# Marilyn's Minutes

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Hi, I'm Marilyn Goulding and I'm a member of the Canadian Advisory Board on Dentin Hypersensitivity. This video explores the issue of erosion and its role in the development of dentin hypersensitivity.

While many patients suffer from the effects of dental erosion, it is *not* frequently diagnosed, and it is poorly understood. What is erosion? Erosion is the dissolution of the tooth structure by acids. In other words, erosion happens when the pH of the mouth drops due to the ingestion of acidic or low pH foods or regurgitation of stomach acids. This softens the enamel or exposed dentin which can then be brushed away, as people usually do brush after they eat. Since acids tend to open the end of dentin tubules, acids are a cause of dentin hypersensitivity.

Now that the dentin is exposed, the movement of fluid in the tubules of the dentin can fluctuate in response to stimulation by cold, heat or touch, causing the sensation of pain. Low pH can continue to remove any smear layer that builds up over the exposed dentin and continue the cycle of hypersensitivity.

Evaluating the daily exposure to low pH foods in your patients' diets is important. Acidic foods and beverages such as citrus fruits and juices, pickled foods, wine, sports drinks and carbonated drinks are a primary concern. Counseling can lead to further control of the dentin hypersensitivity. However, entrenched habits are hard to break. While behaviour modification is critical to controlling the condition, the removal of risk factors alone may not be totally effective. Treating the pain may be the only recourse. Anti-sensitivity toothpastes are an effective adjunct to an overall counseling program, and should be used twice daily for maximum effectiveness.