

TARTAR

— Hiding in Plain Sight —

Some dental problems are difficult or impossible to see with the naked eye, but tartar (aka calculus) isn't one of them.

Yet this hard, light yellow buildup on teeth didn't just appear overnight - it's been building for months or even years, right in front of one's nose.

There are constantly bacteria in your mouth, and they constantly digest sugars to create acid that wears away the outer enamel layer of teeth. Saliva "remineralizes" the damaged enamel with calcium and phosphates.

If you don't brush, floss and rinse with mouthwash regularly, the bacteria begin to combine with proteins and food residue to stick in place on teeth and below gums, forming plaque.

Eventually the bacteria die and the minerals from saliva are left behind, creating a hard, porous surface ideal for more



Heavy tartar buildup along the gumline.

bacteria to grow on.

This is especially true on the lower front (anterior) teeth and upper back (posterior) teeth, because salivary glands are located at those positions in your mouth, creating a constant supply of minerals. Smoking, dry mouth and aging are also factors in tartar formation.

The buildup process repeats itself over and over, creating a thicker and thicker layer.

Eventually the tartar begins to irritate gum tissue, causing inflammation, bleeding, and/or recession – all symptoms of gum disease.

And because the tartar is a con-

sistent home for bacteria, it contributes to worse dental health, which also affects overall health.

Tartar is too hard to remove with a toothbrush or floss, and must be mechanically removed with handheld scalers that scrape teeth, and/or an electronic scaler that uses ultrasonic vibrations to break up hard deposits.

As always, proper at-home dental hygiene habits help reduce the need for an office visit. Brushing will sweep away the plaque before it can harden, and flossing does the same for spaces in-between teeth. Rinsing with mouthwash also reduces bacteria numbers.

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Fri. 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
Select Thursdays &
Saturdays
By Appointment Only

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Tao Sun DDS

NEW PATIENT SPECIAL

\$75

Full exam,
full mouth X-rays
& regular cleaning
(a \$296 value)

Even with good dental hygiene, some people will still get small amounts of tartar that can be removed at each regular six-month cleaning appointment, but if there's a lot of tartar and/or signs of gum disease, a deep cleaning is recommended.

If you need tartar buildup removed, or have any other dental concerns, **call us at (760) 810-7297** today to schedule an appointment.