Child Tooth Sensitivity Checklist

Identify and manage causes of sensitive teeth in your child.

Based on Child Has Sensitive Teeth by Cool Mountain Kids Pediatric Dentistry

1. Understanding Tooth Sensitivity

Learn what causes tooth sensitivity and how your child might experience it.

- ■ Identify if your child experiences stinging, tingling, or sharp pain with hot, cold, salty, or sweet foods.
- ■ Understand that sensitivity occurs when dentin is exposed due to enamel loss or receding gums.
- ■ Recognize that enamel acts as tooth armor, and damage makes teeth vulnerable.
- ■ Note that new permanent teeth can be sensitive to temperature, air, and certain foods.
- ■ Be aware that cracked or chipped teeth expose dentin and nerves, causing sensitivity.
- ■ Consider if improper brushing techniques are wearing down enamel or irritating gums.
- ■ Investigate if teeth grinding (bruxism) is causing enamel wear or tiny cracks.
- ■ Check if damaged or deteriorating fillings are exposing inner tooth portions.

2. Common Causes of Sensitivity

Review potential reasons for your child's tooth sensitivity.

- ■ Check if new permanent teeth are emerging (ages 6-12).
- ■ Assess for any recent dental injuries that may have caused cracked or chipped teeth.
- ■ Observe your child's brushing habits for excessive force.
- ■ Listen for teeth grinding noises, especially during sleep.
- ■ Inquire about previous dental work and the condition of existing fillings.
- ■ Look for signs of tooth decay or cavities.
- ■ Consider if acidic foods or drinks are frequently consumed.

3. When to Seek Professional Help

Recognize the signs that indicate a dental visit is necessary.

- ■ Schedule an appointment if sensitivity persists for more than a week.
- ■ Seek immediate dental care if pain is severe or wakes your child from sleep.
- ■ Consult a dentist if you notice visible damage to a tooth.
- ■ Book a visit if your child avoids certain foods due to pain.
- ■ See a dentist if there is any discoloration on your child's teeth.
- ■ Contact your dentist if you observe swelling around a sensitive tooth.
- ■ Make an appointment if your child complains of a persistent bad taste.
- ■ Visit a dentist if sensitivity is accompanied by a fever.

4. Home Care Strategies

Implement these strategies at home to manage sensitive teeth.

- [ ] Switch to a soft-bristled toothbrush for gentle cleaning.
- [ ] Ensure your child uses fluoride toothpaste.
- [ ] Consider a toothpaste specifically for sensitive teeth for children over 12.
- [ ] Remind your child to avoid chewing on hard objects like ice, pencils, or hard candy.
- [ ] Have your child rinse with warm water after consuming acidic foods or drinks.
- [ ] Maintain regular brushing and flossing routines with gentle technique.
- [ ] Encourage a balanced diet low in sugary and acidic foods.

5. Professional Treatment Options

Understand potential treatments a pediatric dentist may recommend.

- [ ] Discuss fluoride treatments for strengthening enamel.
- [ ] Inquire about dental sealants to protect vulnerable areas.
- [ ] Explore resin fillings to repair cavities or damaged restorations.
- [ ] Consider custom mouthguards if teeth grinding is an issue.
- [ ] Schedule regular preventative cleanings to remove plaque and tartar.
- [ ] Ask about bonding or other restorative procedures for chipped or cracked teeth.
- [ ] Discuss age-appropriate pain management strategies with your dentist.

6. Addressing Specific Causes

Targeted actions based on the identified cause of sensitivity.

- [ ] For new permanent teeth: Be patient and maintain gentle oral hygiene.
- [ ] For cracked/chipped teeth: Consult a dentist immediately for assessment and repair.
- [ ] For improper brushing: Teach and reinforce gentle brushing techniques.
- [ ] For teeth grinding: Discuss mouthguards and stress management with your dentist.
- [ ] For damaged fillings: Schedule an appointment to have fillings repaired or replaced.
- [ ] For tooth decay: Seek prompt dental treatment to address cavities.
- [ ] For exposed dentin: Follow home care and professional recommendations for protection.

7. Evaluating Brushing Technique

Ensure your child's brushing is effective yet gentle.

- [ ] Use a soft-bristled toothbrush.
- [ ] Apply minimal pressure, like holding a butterfly.
- [ ] Brush for two minutes, twice a day.
- [ ] Ensure all tooth surfaces are reached.
- [ ] Avoid scrubbing aggressively.
- [ ] Supervise younger children's brushing.

- Ask your dentist to demonstrate proper technique.

8. Monitoring for Concerns

Keep an eye out for changes that warrant a dental visit.

- Note any increase in the frequency or intensity of pain.
- Observe if sensitivity interferes with eating or drinking.
- Check for any visible chips, cracks, or breaks in teeth.
- Look for changes in tooth color or appearance.
- Monitor for any swelling in the gums or jaw area.
- Be aware of persistent bad breath or taste.
- Note any accompanying symptoms like fever.

Resources & Further Reading

Use these pages while working through the checklist:

Cool Mountain Kids Pediatric Dentistry | 6160 Tutt Blvd #140, Colorado Springs, CO 80923
(719) 550-1010 | www.coolmountainkids.com
Address tooth sensitivity promptly to ensure your child's comfort and oral health.