



Doctor Robinson Sets the Record Straight About Plaque

Plaque is a scientific name for debris that can be removed from teeth. But as your orthodontist and cohort in keeping your mouth healthy, I think you should know exactly what plaque really is.

Plaque is that gooey, whitish-yellow, sticky stuff that can collect on your teeth. If we took some plaque off your teeth or gums the size of **the circle to the left** and put it under a microscope, we would find two or three hundred thousand bacteria, or "bugs," in that small circle. Most people have literally billions of these little bugs in their mouths

This is where the trouble starts. You see these bugs, billions of them, eat any food that you leave in your mouth. They eat and eat and eat. They have nothing else to do since they do not sleep or play tennis. And eventually, these billions of bugs explode ALL OVER YOUR MOUTH! (Yeah, it's gross-that's why I'm telling you about it!)

It gets worse. You see, the explosive by-product of plaque is acid-I prefer to call it "bug slime." And this bug slime burns holes in your teeth. Can you guess what those holes are called? You got it-C-A-V-I-T-I-E-S.

Bug slime also contains gases. You are familiar with the gases if you have ever emptied the garbage. Like stinky garbage, bad breath is caused by the gases produced by bacteria-in this case, plaque bugs.

The moral to this story? DON'T FEED THE BUGS!

If you must eat something with sugar in it, clean your teeth immediately! Brush and floss your teeth after every meal or snack. And if you accidentally leave your traveling toothbrush behind, at least rinse your mouth well with clear water.