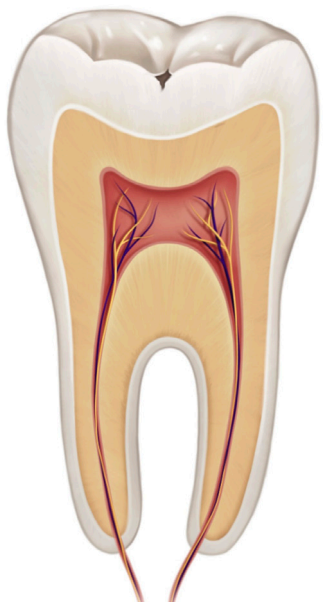
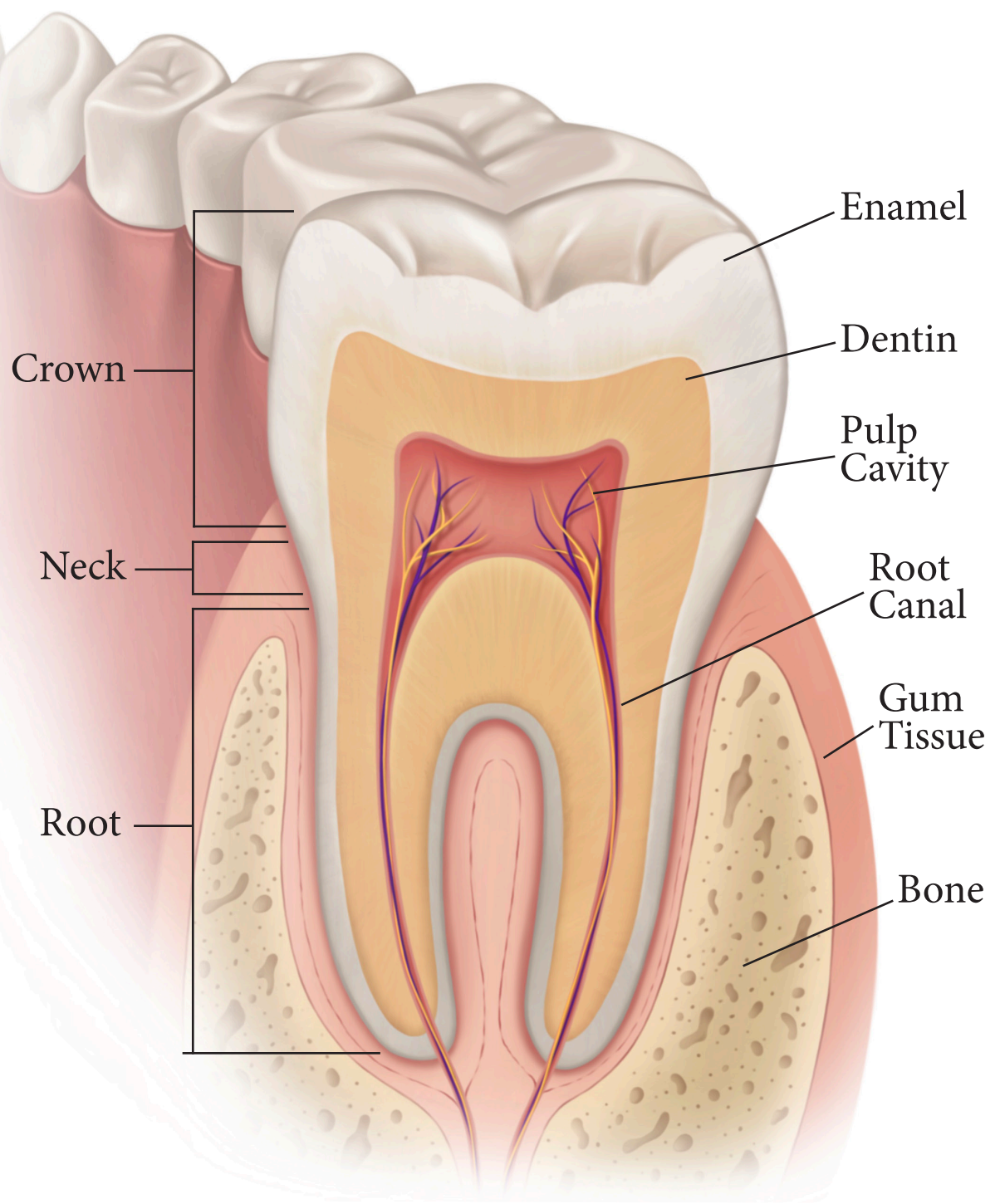


Tooth Decay and Cavities

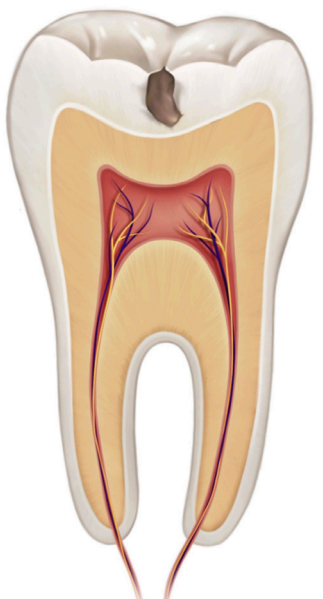
Tooth decay is the breaking down of your teeth due to bacteria, resulting in cavities. Cavities are among the world's most common health problems. Anyone not practicing proper oral hygiene can get cavities. They are rarely life threatening, but can permanently damage your teeth.

Tooth decay is measured in 5 stages, beginning when bacteria in your mouth make acids that damage your tooth's outer layer, the enamel, which can create a hole called a cavity. Eating or drinking sugary foods and not brushing your teeth increases the acids in your mouth, which can cause more cavities that lead to other painful issues.



Stage 1 Symptoms:

- Plaque (a sticky film of bacteria) begins to form.
- The bacteria in the plaque release acids that weaken and discolor your enamel.



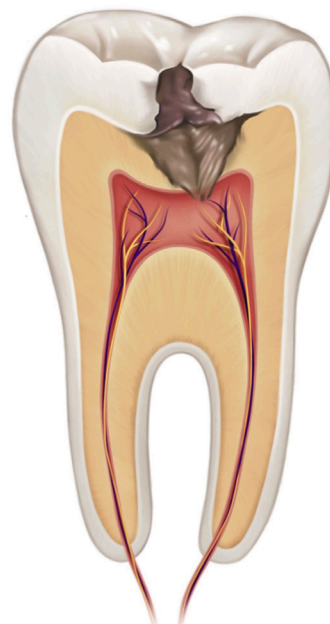
Stage 2 Symptoms:

- Decay continues and cavities begin to form.
- Plaque turns into tartar (a hardened plaque).



Stage 3 Symptoms:

- Cavities reach the softer dentin layer of your tooth.
- Teeth begin to become more sensitive.
- You begin to feel mild tooth pain.



Stage 4 Symptoms:

- Cavities reach the pulp cavity of the tooth.
- Teeth become very sensitive.
- Pain becomes more severe.
- An infection may begin.



Stage 5 Symptoms:

- Cavities impact the entire tooth and may cause pieces to break or fall out.
- Bacteria infection is guaranteed, and impacts your pulp cavity and root canals, allow the infection to enter your blood stream.
- Severe pain and inflammation occur around the teeth affected.