



<http://www.enexus.com/dental-implant/glossindex.htm>

<http://www.dentalleaders.com/terms.htm>

**Abrasion**

Tooth wear caused by forces other than chewing such as holding objects between the teeth or improper brushing.

**Abutment**

A tooth (or implant) that supports a dental prosthesis.

**Alveolar bone**

The part of the jaw that surround the roots of the teeth.

**Alveolar process**

The curving part of the jaw into which the teeth are rooted.

**Alveolus**

The socket in the alveolar bone into which the tooth's root fits.

**Amalgam**

An alloy used in direct dental restorations.

**Analgesia**

Loss of pain sensations without loss of consciousness.

**Ankylosis**

A condition where two hard tissues are fused together. When this happens to a tooth and the alveolar bone, the tooth partially erupts.

**Anesthesia**

**General Anesthesia:** A controlled state of unconsciousness, accompanied by a partial or complete loss of protective reflexes, including loss of ability to independently maintain airway and respond purposefully to physical stimulation or verbal command, produced by a pharmacologic or non-pharmacologic method or combination thereof;

**Intravenous Sedation/Analgesia:** A medically controlled state of depressed consciousness while maintaining the patient's airway, protective reflexes and the ability to respond to stimulation or verbal commands. It includes intravenous administration of sedative and/or analgesic agent(s) and appropriate monitoring.



**Local Anesthesia:** The loss of pain sensation over a specific area of the anatomy without loss of consciousness.

**Non-Intravenous Conscious Sedation:** A medically controlled state of depressed consciousness while maintaining the patient's airway, protective reflexes and the ability to respond to stimulation or verbal commands. It includes administration of sedative and/or analgesic agent(s) by a route other than IV; (PO, PR, Intranasal, IM) and appropriate monitoring.

**Regional Anesthesia:** A term used for local anesthesia. See [Local Anesthesia](#).

### **Apicoectomy**

Removal of the tip of a tooth root.

[Return to Top](#)

---

## **B**

### **Benign**

The mild character of an illness or the non-malignant character of a neoplasm.

### **Bicuspid**

A premolar tooth; a tooth with two cusps.

### **Bilateral**

Occurring on, or pertaining to, both right and left sides.

### **Biopsy**

Process of removing tissue for histologic evaluation.

### **Bitewing radiographs**

X-rays used to reveal the crowns of several upper and lower teeth as they bite down.

### **Bleaching**

A cosmetic dental procedure that whitens the teeth using a bleaching solution.

### **Bonding**

A composite resin applied to a tooth to change its shape and/or color. Bonding also refers to how a filling, orthodontic appliance or some fixed partial dentures are attached to teeth.

**Bridge**

See [Fixed Partial Denture](#) and/or [Removable Partial Denture](#).

**Bruxism**

Constant grinding or clenching of teeth during they day or while asleep.

[Return to Top](#)

---

**C****Calculus**

Hard deposit of mineralized material adhering to crowns and/or roots of teeth.

**Canal**

A relatively narrow tubular passage or channel.

**Root Canal:** Space inside the root portion of a tooth containing pulp tissue.

**Cariogenic**

Promotes tooth decay.

**Caries**

Commonly used term for tooth decay.

**Cavity**

Decay in tooth caused by caries; also referred to as carious lesion.

**Cementum**

Hard connective tissue covering the tooth root.

**Cleft Lip**

Birth defect in which one or more fissures form in the upper lip, which takes place while the fetus is growing.

**Cleft Palate**

Congenital deformity resulting in lack of fusion of the soft and/or hard palate, either partial or complete.

**Clenching**

The clamping and pressing of the jaws and teeth together in centric occlusion, frequently associated with psychological stress or physical effort.

**Composite**

A dental restorative material made up of disparate or separate parts (e.g. resin and quartz particles).

**Conscious Sedation**

A state in which patients are awake and can breathe and swallow on their own but are less aware of what is taking place.

**Crown**

**Anatomical Crown:** That portion of tooth normally covered by, and including, enamel;

**Abutment Crown:** Artificial crown serving for the retention or support of a dental prosthesis;

**Artificial Crown:** Restoration covering or replacing the major part, or the whole of the clinical crown of a tooth;

**Clinical Crown:** That portion of a tooth not covered by supporting tissues.

**Crown Lengthening:** A surgical procedure exposing more tooth for restorative purposes by apically positioning the gingival margin and/or removing supporting bone.

**Cusp**

The pointed portion of the tooth.

**Cyst**

Pathological cavity, usually lined with epithelium, containing fluid or soft matter.

[Return to Top](#)

---

**D****Debridement**

Removing foreign matter or dead tissue.

**Decay**

The lay term for carious lesions in a tooth; decomposition of tooth structure.

**Dental Prophylaxis**

Scaling and polishing procedure performed to remove coronal plaque, calculus, and stains.

**Dental Prosthesis**

An artificial device that replaces one or more missing teeth.

**Dental Specialist**

A dentist who has received postgraduate training in one of the recognized dental specialties.

- DDS
- DMD

**Dentin**

That part of the tooth that is beneath enamel and cementum.

**Dentition**

The teeth in the dental arch.

- **Permanent Dentition**  
Refers to the permanent teeth in the dental arch.
- **Deciduous Dentition**  
Refers to the deciduous or primary teeth in the dental arch.

**Denture**

An artificial substitute for natural teeth and adjacent tissues.

**Denture Base**

The part of the denture that holds the artificial teeth and fits over the gums.

**Direct Restoration**

A restoration fabricated inside the mouth.

**Dry Mouth**

[See Xerostomia](#)

**Dry Socket**

Localized inflammation of the tooth socket following extraction due to infection or loss of blood clot; osteitis.

[Return to Top](#)

---

**E****Edentulous**

Toothless.

**Enamel**

Hard calcified tissue covering dentin of the crown of tooth.

**Endodontist**

A dental specialist who limits his/her practice to treating disease and injuries of the pulp and associated periradicular conditions.

**Erosion**

Wearing down of tooth structure, caused by chemicals (acids).

**Eruption**

When a tooth emerges or pushes through the gums.

**Evaluation**

**Periodic Oral Evaluation:** An evaluation performed on a patient of record to determine any changes in the patient's dental and medical health status since a previous comprehensive or periodic evaluation. This may require interpretation of information acquired through additional diagnostic procedures. Report additional diagnostic procedures separately.

**Limited Oral Evaluation:** Problem focused: an evaluation limited to a specific oral health problem. This may require interpretation of information acquired through additional diagnostic procedures. Definitive procedures may be required on the same date as the evaluation. Typically, patients receiving this type of evaluation have been referred for a specific problem and/or present with dental emergencies, trauma, acute infection, etc.

**Comprehensive Oral Evaluation:** Typically used by a general dentist and/or a specialist when evaluating a patient comprehensively. It is a thorough evaluation and recording of the extraoral and intraoral hard and soft tissues. It may require interpretation of information acquired through additional diagnostic procedures. This would include the evaluation and recording of the patient's dental and medical history and a general health assessment. It may typically include the evaluation and recording of dental caries, missing or unerupted teeth, restorations, occlusal relationships, periodontal conditions (including periodontal charting), hard and soft tissue anomalies, etc.

**Comprehensive Periodontal Evaluation:** Typically includes evaluation of periodontal conditions, probing and charting, evaluation and recording of the patient's dental and medical history and general health assessment. It may include the evaluation and recording of dental caries, missing or unerupted teeth, restorations, occlusal relationships and oral cancer screening.



**Detailed And Extensive Oral Evaluation—Problem-Focused, By Report:**

A detailed and extensive problem-focused evaluation entails extensive diagnostic and cognitive modalities based on the findings of a comprehensive oral evaluation. Integration of more extensive diagnostic modalities to develop a treatment plan for a specific problem is required. The condition requiring this type of evaluation should be described and documented. Examples of conditions requiring this type of evaluation may include dentofacial anomalies, complicated perio-prosthetic conditions, complex temporomandibular dysfunction, facial pain of unknown origin, severe systemic diseases requiring multi-disciplinary consultation, etc.

**Re-Evaluation—Limited, Problem Focused (established patient; not post-operative visit):** This includes assessing the status of a previously existing condition. Examples of conditions requiring this type of evaluation may include: A traumatic injury where no treatment was rendered but the patient needs follow-up monitoring; Evaluation for undiagnosed continuing pain: A soft tissue lesion requiring follow-up evaluation.

**Excision**

Surgical removal of bone or tissue.

**Extraction**

The process or act of removing a tooth or tooth parts.

[Return to Top](#)

---

**F**

**FADI:** Fellow, Academy of Dentistry International

**FAGD:** Fellow, Academy of General Dentistry

**Filling**

A lay term used for the restoring of lost tooth structure by using materials such as metal, alloy, plastic or porcelain.

**Fixed Appliances**

Orthodontic devices, commonly known as braces, that are bonded to the teeth to produce different tooth movements to help reposition teeth for orthodontic therapy.

**Fixed Partial Denture**

A fixed partial denture is a prosthetic replacement of one or more missing teeth cemented or attached to the abutment teeth or implant abutments adjacent to the space.



## **Fracture**

The breaking of a part, especially of a bony structure; breaking of a tooth.

## **Full-Mouth X-Rays**

A combination of 14 or more periapical and 4 bitewing films of the back teeth. This series of x-rays reveals all the teeth (their crowns and roots) and the alveolar bone around them.

[Return to Top](#)

## **G**

### **General Anesthesia**

A deep level of sedation in which patients lose consciousness, feel no pain, and have no memory of what is taking place around them.

### **Gingiva**

Soft tissues overlying the crowns of unerupted teeth and encircling the necks of those that have erupted.

### **Gingival Hyperplasia**

An overgrowth of gingival tissues.

### **Gingivitis**

Inflammation of gingival tissue without loss of connective tissue.

### **Gingivectomy**

The excision or removal of gingiva.

### **Gingivoplasty**

Surgical procedure to reshape gingiva.

### **Graft**

A piece of tissue or alloplastic material placed in contact with tissue to repair a defect or supplement a deficiency.

### **Guided tissue regeneration (GTR)**

Procedure during flap surgery for periodontal disease in which a membrane is inserted between the alveolar bone and the bone graft to encourage the gum tissues to grow onto the alveolar bone.

[Return to Top](#)



---

## H

Currently there are no terms listed alphabetically under this letter. You can use the search function at the top of this page to find information that may exist in other locations on ADA.org.

[Return to Top](#)

---

## I

### **Imaging, Diagnostic**

This would include, but is not limited to, CAT scans, MRIs, photographs, radiographs, etc.

### **Immediate Denture**

Prosthesis constructed for placement immediately after removal of remaining natural teeth.

### **Impacted Tooth**

An unerupted or partially erupted tooth that is positioned against another tooth, bone, or soft tissue so that complete eruption is unlikely.

### **Implant**

Material inserted or grafted into tissue.

- **Dental Implant**

A device specially designed to be placed surgically within or on the mandibular or maxillary bone as a means of providing for dental replacement; endosteal (endosseous); eposteal (subperiosteal); transosteal (transosseous).

### **Implantation, Tooth**

Placement of an artificial or natural tooth into an alveolus.

### **Inlay**

An indirect intracoronal restoration; a dental restoration made outside of the oral cavity to correspond to the form of the prepared cavity, which is then luted into the tooth.

### **Interproximal**

Between the teeth.

### **Intraoral**

Inside the mouth.



### **Intravenous Sedation**

Medications used intravenously (through the bloodstream) to produce varying levels of sedation.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ J

### **Jaw**

A common name for either the maxilla or the mandible.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ K

Currently there are no terms listed alphabetically under this letter. You can use the search function at the top of this page to find information that may exist in other locations on ADA.org.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ L

### **Labial**

Pertaining to or around the lip.

### **Lesion**

An injury or wound; area of diseased tissue.

### **Lingual**

Pertaining to or around the tongue; surface of the tooth directed toward the tongue; opposite of facial.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ M

**MAGD:** Mastership in the Academy of General Dentistry

**Maintenance, Periodontal**

Therapy for preserving the state of health of the periodontium.

**Malignant**

Having the properties of dysplasia, invasion, and metastasis.

**Malocclusion**

Improper alignment of biting or chewing surfaces of upper and lower teeth.

**Maryland Bridge**

A type of fixed partial denture not requiring crowns. The prosthesis is bonded to the natural teeth to secure it.

**Maxilla**

The upper jaw.

**Molar**

Teeth posterior to the premolars (bicuspid) on either side of the jaw; grinding teeth, having large crowns and broad chewing surfaces.

**Mouthguard**

Device that fits over the teeth to prevent injury to the teeth, mouth or lips. May also refer to a device that prevents tooth grinding or treats temporomandibular disorders.

**Mucous Membrane**

Lining of the oral cavity as well as other canals and cavities of the body; also called "mucosa."

[Return to Top](#)

---

**N**

Currently there are no terms listed alphabetically under this letter. You can use the search function at the top of this page to find information that may exist in other locations on ADA.org.

[Return to Top](#)

---

**O****Obstructive Sleep Apnea**

A disorder in which breathing stops for short periods of time during sleep.

**Occlusal**

Pertaining to the biting surfaces of the premolar and molar teeth or contacting surfaces of opposing teeth or opposing occlusion rims.

**Occlusion**

Any contact between biting or chewing surfaces of maxillary (upper) and mandibular (lower) teeth.

**Onlay**

An indirect restoration made outside the oral cavity that overlays a cusp or cusps of the tooth, which is then luted to the tooth.

**Oral**

Pertaining to the mouth.

**Oral And Maxillofacial Surgeon**

A dental specialist whose practice is limited to the diagnosis, surgical and adjunctive treatment of diseases, injuries, deformities, defects and esthetic aspects of the oral and maxillofacial regions.

**Oral Mucosa**

The pink-red tissues that line the mouth.

**Orthodontist**

A dental specialist whose practice is limited to the interception and treatment of malocclusion of the teeth and their surrounding structures.

**Orthognathic Surgery**

Surgery performed to correct facial imbalances caused by abnormalities of the jaw bones.

**Osseointegration**

The process by which bone heals around an implant.

**Osteoplasty**

Surgical procedure that modifies the configuration of bone.

**Osteotomy**

Surgical cutting of bone.

**Overdenture**

A removable prosthetic device that overlies and may be supported by retained tooth roots or implants.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ P

**Palate**

The hard and soft tissues forming the roof of the mouth that separates the oral and nasal cavities.

**Palliative**

Action that relieves pain but is not curative.

**Partial Denture**

Usually refers to a prosthetic device that replaces missing teeth; see [Fixed Partial Denture](#) or [Removable Partial Denture](#).

**Parotid Glands**

Major salivary glands located in front of and below the ears.

**Patient**

An individual who has established a professional relationship with a dentist for the delivery of dental health care. For matters relating to communication of information and consent, this term includes the patient's parent, caretaker, guardian, or other individual as appropriate under state law and the circumstances of the case.

**PC:** Personal Corporation

**Pediatric Dentist**

A dental specialist whose practice is limited to treatment of children from birth through adolescence; formerly known as a pedodontist.

**Pedodontist**

See [Pediatric Dentist](#).

**Pellicle**

A thin nonbacterial film from saliva that covers the teeth.

**Periapical X-Ray**

An x-ray that shows several entire teeth (crowns and roots) and includes a small amount of the periapical bone (surrounding the root tips).

**Periodontal**

Pertaining to the supporting and surrounding tissues of the teeth.

**Periodontal Abscess**

An infection in the gum pocket that can destroy hard and soft tissues.

**Periodontal Disease**

Inflammatory process of the gingival tissues and/or periodontal membrane of the teeth, resulting in an abnormally deep gingival sulcus, possibly producing periodontal pockets and loss of supporting alveolar bone.

**Periodontal Pocket**

Pathologically deepened gingival sulcus; a feature of periodontal disease.

**Periodontist**

A dental specialist whose practice is limited to the treatment of diseases of the supporting and surrounding tissues of the teeth.

**Periodontitis**

Inflammation and loss of the connective tissue of the supporting or surrounding structure of teeth with loss of attachment.

**Plaque**

A soft sticky substance that accumulates on teeth composed largely of bacteria and bacterial derivatives.

**Post**

An elongated projection fitted and cemented within the prepared root canal, serving to strengthen and retain restorative material and/or a crown restoration.

**Posterior**

Refers to teeth and tissues towards the back of the mouth (distal to the canines): maxillary and mandibular premolars and molars.

**Precision Attachment**

Interlocking device, one component of which is fixed to an abutment or abutments and the other is integrated into a fixed or removable prosthesis in order to stabilize and/or retain it.

**Premedication**

The use of medications prior to dental procedures.

**Prophylaxis**

Scaling and polishing procedure performed to remove coronal plaque, calculus and stains.

**Prosthesis**

Artificial replacement of any part of the body.

**Prosthodontis**

A dental specialist whose practice is limited to the restoration of the natural teeth and/or the replacement of missing teeth with artificial substitutes.

**Pulp**

Connective tissue that contains blood vessels and nerve tissue which occupies the pulp cavity of a tooth.

**Pulp Cavity**

The space within a tooth which contains the pulp.

**Pulpectomy**

Complete removal of vital and non vital pulp tissue from the root canal space.

**Pulpotomy**

Surgical removal of a portion of the pulp with the aim of maintaining the vitality of the remaining portion by means of an adequate dressing; pulp amputation.

[Return to Top](#)

---

**Q**

Currently there are no terms listed alphabetically under this letter. You can use the search function at the top of this page to find information that may exist in other locations on ADA.org.

[Return to Top](#)

---

**R****Radiograph**

An image produced by projecting radiation, as x-rays, on photographic film. Commonly called x-ray.

**Ranula**

A cyst that can develop under the tongue on the floor of the mouth.

**Rebase**

To replace the denture base.

**Reline**

To resurface the side of the denture that is in contact with the soft tissues of the mouth to make it fit more securely.

**Removable Appliance**

Removable orthodontic appliances used to effect simple tipping movements of one tooth or several.

**Removable Partial Denture**

A removable partial denture (removable bridge) is a prosthetic replacement of one or more missing teeth that can be removed by the patient.

**Resorb**

To dissolve.

**Retainer**

- **Orthodontic Retainer:** Appliance to stabilize teeth following orthodontic treatment.
- **Prosthodontic Retainer:** A part of a fixed partial denture that attaches a pontic to the abutment tooth, implant abutment, or implant.

**Root**

The anatomic portion of the tooth that is covered by cementum and is located in the alveolus (socket) where it is attached by the periodontal apparatus; radicular portion of tooth.

**Root Canal**

The portion of the pulp cavity inside the root of a tooth; the chamber within the root of the tooth that contains the pulp.

**Root Canal Therapy**

The treatment of disease and injuries of the pulp and associated periradicular conditions.

**Root Caries**

Tooth decay that forms on the roots.

**Root Planing**

A procedure designed to remove microbial flora, bacterial toxins, calculus, and diseased cementum or dentin on the root surfaces and in the pocket.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ S

**Scaling**

Removal of plaque, calculus, and stain from teeth.

**Sealants**

Plastic resin placed on the biting surfaces of molars to prevent bacteria from attacking the enamel and causing caries.

**Sjogren's Syndrome**

An autoimmune disorder (mostly affecting older women) that is characterized by partial or complete cessation of saliva and tears. It can be associated with rheumatic disease, such as rheumatic arthritis, lupus, or scleroderma.

**Splint**

A device used to support, protect, or immobilize oral structures that have been loosened, replanted, fractured or traumatized. Also refers to devices used in the treatment of temporomandibular joint disorders.

**Stomatitis**

Inflammation of the membranes in the mouth.

**Sublingual Glands**

Major salivary glands located in the mucosa on the floor of the mouth.

**Submandibular Glands**

Walnut-sized major salivary glands located beneath the tongue.

**Suture**

Stitch used to repair incision or wound.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ T

**Temporary Removable Denture**

An interim prosthesis designed for use over limited period of time.

**Temporomandibular (TMJ)**

The connecting hinge mechanism between the base of the skull (temporal bone) and the lower jaw (mandible).



### **Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction**

Abnormal functioning of temporomandibular joint; also refers to symptoms arising in other areas secondary to the dysfunction.

### **Torus**

A bony elevation or protuberance of bone.

[Return to Top](#)

---

## **U**

### **Unerupted**

Tooth/teeth that have not penetrated into the oral cavity

[Return to Top](#)

---

## **V**

### **Veneer**

In the construction of crowns or pontics, a layer of tooth-colored material, usually, but not limited to, composite, porcelain, ceramic or acrylic resin, attached to the surface by direct fusion, cementation, or mechanical retention; also refers to a restoration that is luted to the facial surface of a tooth.

[Return to Top](#)

---

## **W**

Currently there are no terms listed alphabetically under this letter. You can use the search function at the top of this page to find information that may exist in other locations on ADA.org.

[Return to Top](#)

---

## **X**

### **Xerostomia**

Decreased salivary secretion that produces a dry and sometimes burning sensation of the oral mucosa and/or cervical caries.



**X-Ray**  
Radiograph.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ Y

Currently there are no terms listed alphabetically under this letter. You can use the search function at the top of this page to find information that may exist in other locations on ADA.org.

[Return to Top](#)

---

■ Z

Currently there are no terms listed alphabetically under this letter. You can use the search function at the top of this page to find information that may exist in other locations on ADA.org.