

"Occlusal Collapse" Caused by
a 'Negative Chain Reaction'
Starting from a "Single Cavity".

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● **The Importance of "Preventive Dentistry", Starting from a "Single Cavity".**

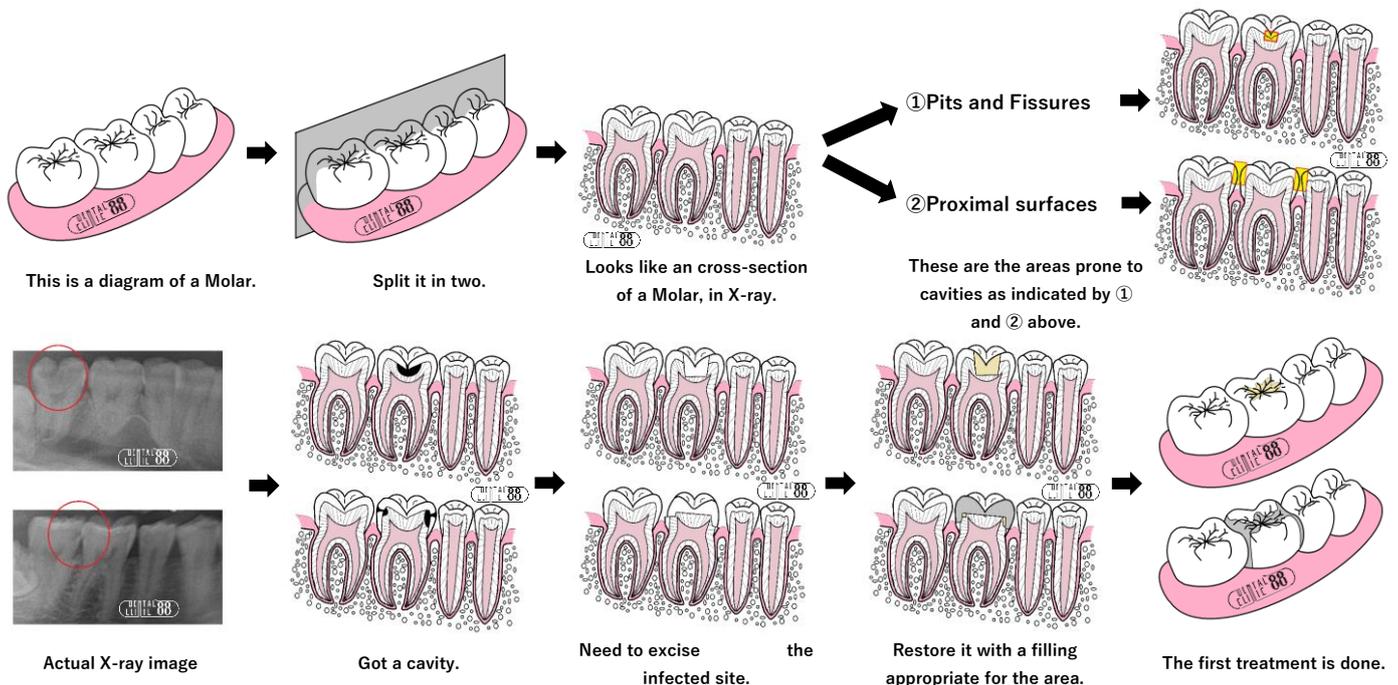
Preventive dentistry means taking preventive measures that the individual requires in advance to avoid future problems. This is the most important concept in today's dental care. Do you currently have anyone around you (relatives, parents, siblings) who uses dentures? Have you ever wondered, 'Why did they end up needing dentures?'

Would you believe it if I told you that a 'Single Cavity' was the cause of everything?

Some of you might think, 'Here we go again with an exaggerated story,' but as I'm about to explain, there is no doubt that a 'Single Cavity' can be the trigger for everything. I'm not exaggerating or embellishing the truth. This is the reality for anyone who doesn't have a regular dentist to manage their oral health with proper preventive care and only visits the dentist when something goes wrong.

● **First Cavity Treatment.**

The areas where cavities are most likely to form, as I may have mentioned before, are: ① The fine grooves on the chewing surface of molars (occlusal pits and fissures), ② The gaps between teeth (proximal surfaces), and ③ The spaces between the teeth and gums (cervical area). Especially for ③, it can be prevented simply by learning the correct way to use a toothbrush. So, let's assume that areas ① and ② were not properly protected and ended up with cavities.



As described above, after removing the cavity (the area where the infection began), in insurance-based treatment, the removed part is restored with Resin. With this, the treatment will be complete.

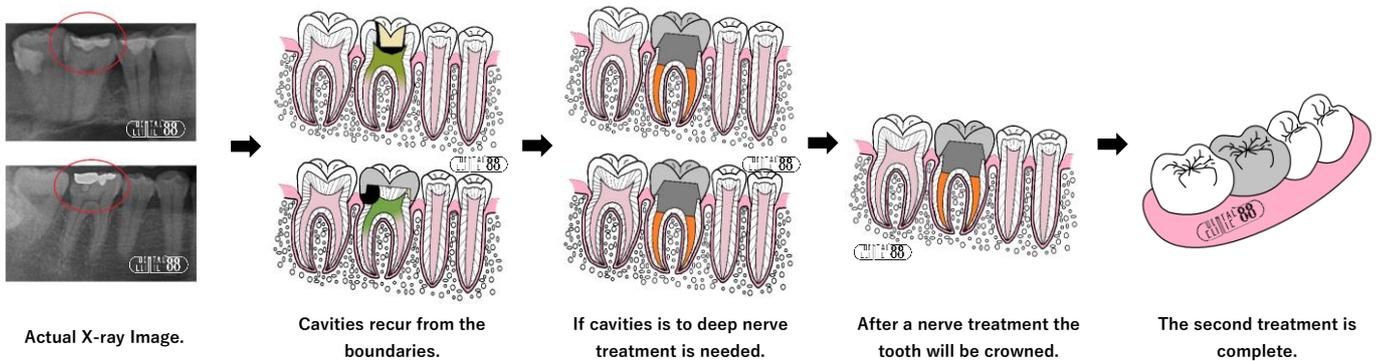
Many people will think that the problem has been cured and say, 'It's healed !!' .

However, this is the first misconception.

The issue is not truly resolved. The infected area is merely removed to stop the progression of the disease, and then an artificial material is filled in to replace it. The original cause of the cavity in that area was poor cleaning. After this treatment, there is an invisible but significant 'Step' at the junction between the tooth, the area that was cut, and the filling material, from the bacteria's perspective. **If the 'Cleaning' does not improve, cavities will inevitably develop again in that area.**

● Second Cavity Treatment.

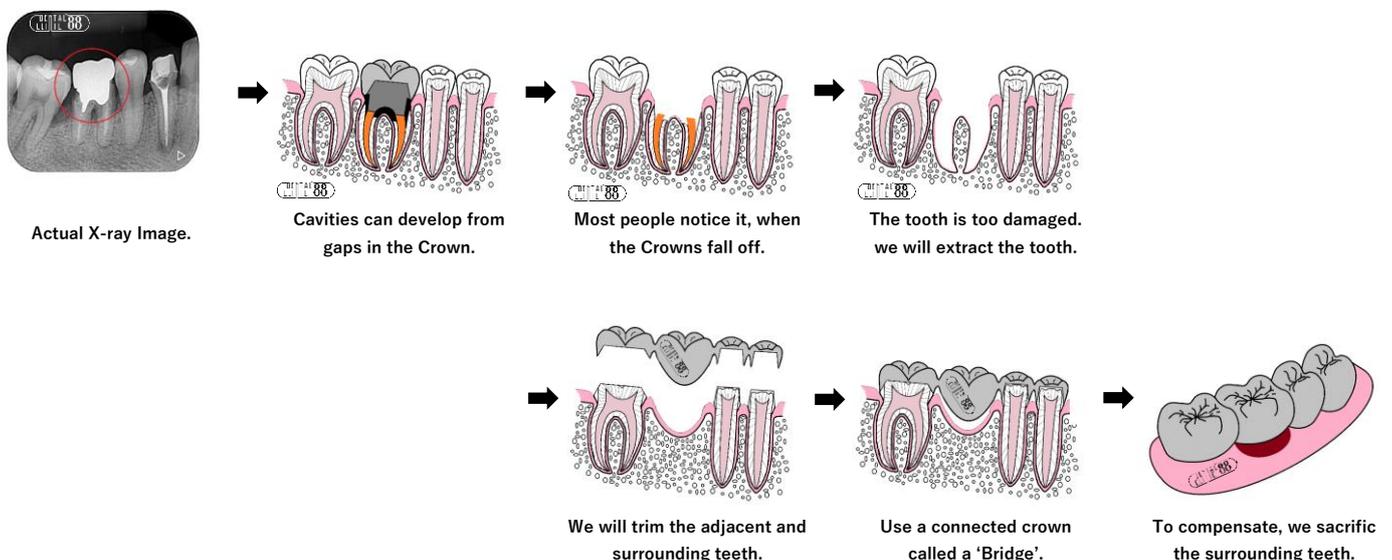
Let's assume that after the first treatment, you continued on without improving your cleaning habits or recognizing the importance of prevention. Healthy teeth become stronger as they grow and gradually become less prone to cavities. However, a tooth that has been treated once has more areas that require cleaning than a healthy tooth that has experienced no issues. If proper cleaning and preventive measures are not taken, cavities will inevitably recur in such a tooth.



Similarly, if you think that '**It's healed !!**', with the treatment is complete. Cavities will **recur** over and over again. After repeating this twice, it should be clear without us having to emphasize it so strongly, but the causes are a **lack of self-care**, an **absence of preventive concepts**, failure to recognize the limits of self-management, and **insufficient regular professional maintenance**.

● Third Treatment.

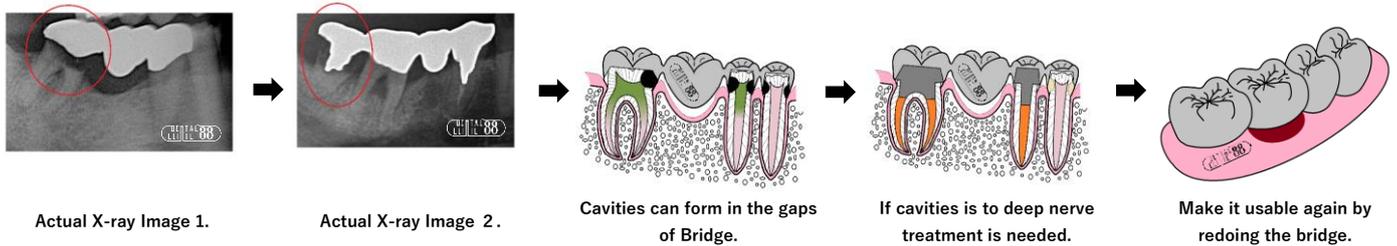
It is rare to perform a third cavity treatment on the same tooth. This is because, by that time, the tooth's nerve is usually already removed, so even if there is a cavity, there are often no symptoms like pain. By the time it is noticed, **the tooth is often so damaged that it cannot be saved**. Additionally, since the blood flow that nourishes the tooth along with the nerve is also removed, the tooth does not receive nutrients like healthy teeth do. As a result, it tends to become brittle, like dead wood, and is more prone to cracking."



After a tooth is extracted, the gap is filled by using the surrounding teeth to support a connected structure called a '**Bridge**.' However, because the '**Bridge**' is connected, it is **very difficult to clean**. Without improving cleaning methods and ensuring regular professional maintenance, it cannot be properly maintained.

● **Fourth Treatment.**

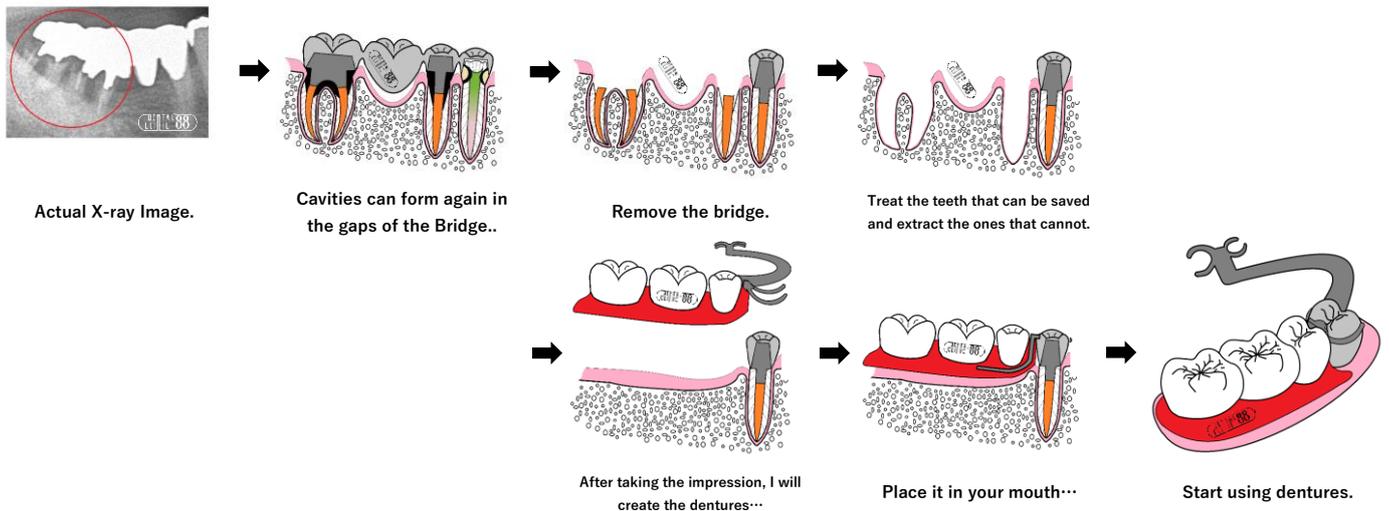
A '**Bridge**' involves the surrounding teeth, so problems can start to spread like wildfire to the adjacent teeth. Because the teeth are structurally connected in a '**Bridge**', cleaning is extremely difficult. The most challenging area is around the dummy tooth where a tooth was extracted. Over time, the bone at the extraction site shrinks, creating **gaps around the dummy tooth, making it increasingly prone to plaque buildup**. Along with the plaque, bacteria in the mouth proliferate, leading to cavities forming in the gaps of the dental prosthesis.



The treatment will be completed, but this may be **the last chance for you to chew with your own teeth**. If there is no improvement in your situation or in your awareness, after this...

● **Fifth Treatment.**

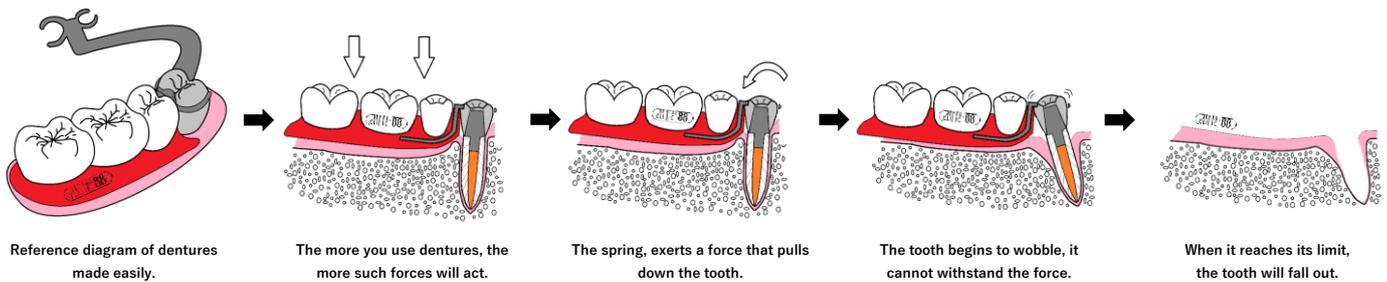
Similarly, a tooth that has had its nerve removed due to deep decay will not cause pain even if it gets decayed again, and the tooth itself becomes very weak. When such a tooth requires retreatment, it is often no longer salvageable. Moreover, there may be no surrounding teeth to rely on this time. The only treatment available under insurance would be a denture, as I mentioned at the beginning.



As such, people who only visit the dentist when problems arise tend to end up with 'Dentures'. To prevent this, it is crucial to properly enhance self-management skills as needed, understand the importance of early prevention, recognize the limits of self-care, and receive regular professional maintenance. Without these measures, you will inevitably follow the path mentioned above and end up with dentures. However, this is not the end. This is where the true '**Occlusal Collapse**' begins. Using poorly designed 'Dentures', hastily made just because teeth were lost, can further damage the already diminishing occlusion (bite) between your teeth. Poorly fitting **Dentures can cause your bite to collapse under the force of your own chewing!**

● **The Consequences of Using Hastily Made Dentures.**

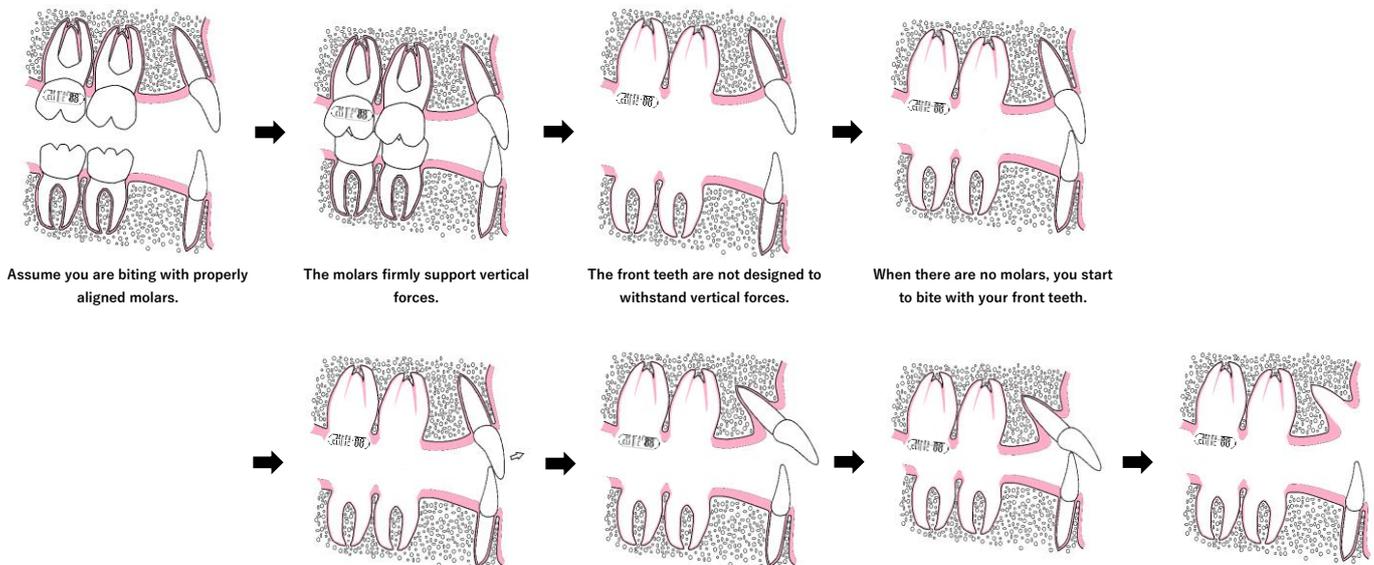
One common concern patients have about '**Dentures**' is that, as devices designed to compensate for lost body functions, they are entirely different from chewing with one's own teeth. This is true. '**Dentures**' are, after all, just devices to supplement function, much like prosthetic legs for those who have lost their limbs. Without practice and adjustment, even using them properly can be difficult. Furthermore, no matter how skilled one becomes in using them, unfortunately, they will never be able to chew like their natural teeth. From a patient's perspective, it is common to anticipate these kinds of issues, but the real problem with '**Dentures**' lies elsewhere. The biggest issue with '**Dentures**' is that **they place a significant burden on the remaining natural teeth.**



Using '**Dentures**' that exert a force similar to a '**Bottle Opener**' is akin to using a '**Tooth-Pulling Device**.' If one tooth can no longer withstand the pressure and fails, the clasp is then attached to the adjacent tooth, which will also eventually be lost. This situation is essentially a straight path toward '**Full Dentures**'.

● **The Effects of Losing Molars.**

In this way, people gradually lose their molars, and once the bite alignment of the molars is lost, this '**Occlusal Collapse**' begins to accelerate.



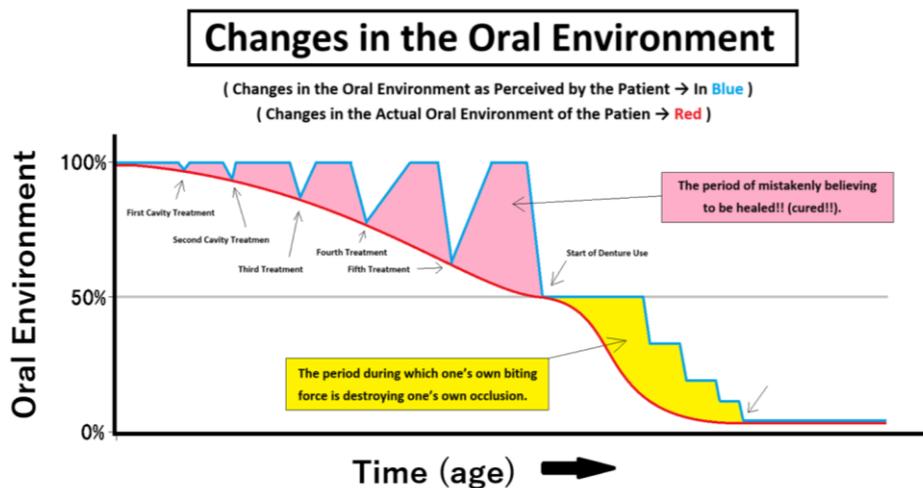
When molars are lost, people tend to rely on their front teeth to manage, but the front teeth are not designed to withstand such forces. It is only with the support of molars that the upper and lower jaws can properly align and maintain a stable bite. When this support is lost, 'occlusal collapse' progresses rapidly without the person even realizing it, making full dentures inevitable.

● **The Difference Between the Patient's Perception of 'Changes in Oral Health'.**

As mentioned above, if you fail to fully understand the condition of your own oral cavity, neglect self-care, remain unaware of the importance of prevention, and only visit the dentist when something goes wrong, you risk causing a chain reaction of problems from a 'Single Cavity,' leading to 'occlusal collapse'. I hope that many of you reading this will understand and agree, but in reality, even those who visit the dentist and temporarily understand the explanations, saying **'I see!'** and being quite impressed, often stop coming afterward. Why is this?

While this is merely our clinic's perspective, and there may be other circumstances, I believe it's because they don't see it as their own problem and think it's someone else's issue.

I think it's difficult to connect the perceived condition of their oral environment with what is actually happening. So, let's take a look at a graph showing **'Time (age)'** and **'The progression of the Oral Environment'**.



We believe the main reason is thinking that each single treatment has completely cured the problem. In dental treatment, it is extremely difficult to fully restore a tooth to its original state. We are simply removing something and placing something else to fill the gap. Without learning how to manage this, the condition will inevitably worsen. Ending with just the treatment means that the root cause has not been addressed, and only a temporary fix has been applied.

● **The Importance of "Preventive Dentistry" !!**

We would appreciate it if you could understand the importance of 'Preventing Cavities' from the very beginning.

(※ In reality, other factors such as additional cavities, periodontal disease, and issues related to occlusion contribute, making this more complex. This is merely an example regarding 'a single cavity' and its 'cleanability' issue.)

● **What Should Those Already Caught in Such a Chain Reaction Do?**

It is important to recognize the significance of **prevention**. Some may say, **'I never knew that until now!'** but that's not a problem. First, embrace the concept of prevention, find a **'Primary Dentist'** who will thoroughly examine your entire oral health and with whom you feel comfortable. Next, understand the current condition of your oral cavity and ensure that you take the necessary steps to maintain it.

Once that's done, learn the self-management methods appropriate for your current situation, and ensure that any areas where your self-care falls short are addressed through regular check-ups. By doing this, you can break free from a vicious cycle. It may be a long journey, but

let's stop covering up the problem.