

3.3 Identifying dental caries



A healthy mouth

Pink gums indicate a healthy blood supply.
Teeth are not discoloured.

Upper and lower teeth meet each other when biting.



First stage of caries

The upper incisors develop a dull white band (demineralisation) along the gum line, which usually goes undetected by the parents or carers. This first stage of caries is called a white spot lesion and is reversible.

Refer to an oral health professional.
Encourage good oral hygiene practices.

Photo is courtesy of South Australian Dental Service



Early stages of caries

Some brown spots on teeth, redness and swelling of gums.

Refer to an oral health professional.
Encourage good oral hygiene practices.



Advanced stages of caries

Blackened areas and very red and inflamed gums.

This level of caries can lead to the removal of teeth.
Refer to an oral health professional.