

CLEAR THE AISLES FOR SUPER SMILES

BY DR ELIYAHU SIMCHA GHERMAN, DDS

Imagine you and your family decided only to eat healthy. It's Friday afternoon, your family sent you shopping and you are in a rush. Unfortunately, you picked the supermarket with the tiny aisles. Everyone is trying to make their way to the checkout counters. Carts are bumping into each other and there is no room to move. You reach for the organic high fiber chulent bean mix and, as you do, a glass bottle of oil crashes to the floor. People start slipping and more items come crashing down. A jar of pickles misses you by inches! You hear over the loud speaker "spill in aisle 14" and one of those super cleaner machines is dispatched, but there is no room for it to get down the aisle... HELP!!!!....

With an oil-drenched shirt and pickle juice in your hair you finally make it to the checkout. The cashier takes one look at you and says, "Excuse me, sir, but you are wearing more than you are buying."

Ok, so what does this have to do with your mouth?

Let me explain.

When teeth are lined up correctly, they form what is called embrasure spaces, or spillways. Each spillway is like an aisle in the supermarket. In the supermarket we saw why we want wide and clear aisles to avoid damage. In our mouths as well, when the teeth are ideally aligned, the aisles are open, passage is free and uninhibited and food can escape during chewing. In this case, chewing food actually becomes a self-cleansing process, whereby

eating a piece of bread, for example, will push out any debris that might still be hanging out in the "aisles". Don't get me wrong, it is still a good idea to brush. Even, in the worst case scenario, if food does get caught, a simple brushing or flossing will clean up the embrasure spaces with ease.

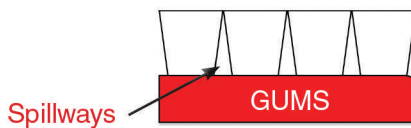


Diagram of straight teeth with clear spillways:

But what happens when the teeth are crowded and overlapped? The spillways disappear and instead we are left with crowded aisles and mayhem.



Diagram of crowded teeth and blocked spillways:

Chewing even the healthiest of foods becomes damaging as food becomes lodged between the teeth, bacteria takes hold, inflaming the surrounding gums and even dissolving the bone that holds the teeth. Attempts at cleaning these areas by brushing or flossing are nearly impossible, because the spillways are blocked. Even a professional hygienist cannot sufficiently clean the areas where the teeth are fully overlapped.



This patient, RH, had severe crowding in his lower teeth. Notice the plaque buildup. Invisalign was used for ten months. After: Notice the unobstructed spillways and the healthier appearance.

On a final note, because this occurs in the mouth (the entrance to your body), the bacteria that takes residence between your teeth can also have a negative impact on your overall health. Studies by the American Dental Association have shown that crooked teeth can lead to oral infections and make one more prone to other serious ailments such as heart disease, stroke, pneumonia and diabetes.

So no matter what age you are, look at your teeth in the mirror. If they are crooked, then it may be the time to make that move now, to avoid damaging effects in the future. Fixing lower crowding can be as easy as wearing clear unobtrusive aligners for as little as three months. Anything else is just sweeping the dirt under the carpet.

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