What is Tooth Decay?

- Tooth decay is a common problem that occurs when acids in your mouth dissolve the outer layers of your teeth. It is also known as dental decay or dental caries.

- Your mouth is naturally full of bacteria that combine with small food particles and saliva to form a sticky film known as plaque. If the plaque is allowed to build up, the acid can begin to break down the outer surface of your tooth.

What are the Symptoms?

- Quite often, tooth decay may not cause any symptoms until it has reached an advanced stage. As the problem develops, symptoms of tooth decay can include:

- Toothache

- Tooth sensitivity – you may feel tenderness or pain when eating or drinking something hot, cold or sweet

- Grey, brown or black or white spots appearing on your teeth

Although tooth decay is a common problem, it is often entirely preventable. The best way to avoid tooth decay is to keep your teeth and gums as healthy as possible.

In order to help reduce the chances of developing decay, follow the steps below:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day; after breakfast and before bed is ideal.

- Use toothpaste with a Fluoride concentration of at least 1000ppm.

- After brushing, spit out excess toothpaste out and avoid rinsing your mouth with water.

- Consumption of sweet or sugary foods, like soft drinks and sweets, should ideally, be limited to following a meal. This is less harmful to teeth.

- Sugary foods are more damaging if consumed in the evening.