

Untreated cavities can lead to **pain, infection, tooth loss, and more serious health problems**. Bacteria from the cavity can spread to other parts of the body, causing a tooth abscess, an infection in the jawbone, or contributing to inflammation associated with heart disease and rheumatoid arthritis. In severe cases, these systemic infections can be fatal, although this is rare. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]

Local dental complications

- **Severe pain and sensitivity:** As a cavity deepens, it can reach the tooth's nerve, causing severe pain and making it difficult to eat or speak.
- **Tooth abscess:** A cavity can lead to a serious bacterial infection and pus-filled pocket near the root of the tooth.
- **Tooth fracture and loss:** A weakened tooth structure can break or crumble, eventually leading to the tooth needing extraction.
- **Gum disease:** Bacteria from a cavity can spread to the gums, causing inflammation and leading to more severe gum disease like periodontitis, which can cause bone loss. [2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10]

Systemic health complications

- **Spreading infection:** An untreated abscess can allow bacteria to enter the bloodstream and spread to other parts of the body, potentially leading to more serious health issues.
- **Heart disease:** Research shows a link between oral infections and heart problems. Bacteria can travel to the heart, increasing inflammation and the risk of cardiovascular disease.
- **Brain abscess:** In rare cases, bacteria from the mouth have been linked to the development of a brain abscess.
- **Rheumatoid arthritis:** Oral bacteria in the bloodstream can worsen the inflammation associated with this autoimmune disease. [1, 2, 4, 6, 11]

Other consequences

- **Difficulty with daily activities:** Chronic pain from cavities can make it hard to eat, affecting digestion and overall quality of life.
- **Impact on children:** Untreated cavities can affect a child's ability to eat, speak, play, and learn. [1, 2, 8, 12]

AI responses may include mistakes.

[1] <https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/data-research/facts-stats/fast-facts-cavities.html>

[2] <https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/about/cavities-tooth-decay.html>

[3] <https://thesmolist.com/dental-blog/health-hygiene/how-long-can-you-leave-a-cavity-untreated/>

[4] <https://www.brightsmilesdentist.com/skipping-the-dentist-the-risks-of-ignoring-a-cavity/>

[5] <https://www.sedaperio.com/what-is-a-jaw-infection-and-what-does-it-feel-like/>

[6] <https://cherryhillsedationdentist.com/dangers-tooth-decay/>

[7] <https://smileeverydaydentistry.com/signs-you-have-a-cavity-how-to-treat-it/>

[8] <https://www.broadwaydentaltexas.com/2023/10/18/health-risks-from-untreated-tooth-decay/>

- [9] <https://www.emergencydentalclinics.ca/site/blog/2022/10/15/how-long-can-leave-cavity-untreated>
- [10] <https://totaldentalcaremd.com/blog/what-happens-if-a-cavity-is-left-untreated>
- [11] <https://www.douglaspohldds.com/services/emergency-dentistry/>
- [12] <https://www.perfectsmile-dental.com/news/consequences-of-untreated-cavities/>