



Approximately 13-29% of Canadians experience recurring symptoms

## % reflux

**Mara** was tired of feeling like her heart and stomach were on fire every time she ate. She wasn't able to eat any of her favourite spicy dishes anymore. It made all family meals a challenge and that was terribly upsetting to her because she loved to cook and have her children and grandchildren around her at the table. Mara treated her heartburn with all sorts of over-the-counter medications. Nothing seemed to be working. Now she was also having trouble sleeping. Every time she would lie down the burning would get worse.

At 65, Mara didn't feel old, but the condition was taking its toll on her emotionally and physically. It was during her visit to her dental hygienist that she learned she didn't have just "heartburn", but rather needed prompt medical attention for GERD: Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease.

Mara's dental hygienist noticed enamel erosion on the surfaces of the posterior teeth and the palatal surfaces of the maxillary anterior teeth. Enamel erosion is a clinical

sign of GERD. The dental hygienist asked Mara if she suffered some of the reflux symptoms.

Dental erosion is an irreversible process. It is characterized by mineral loss. The erosion on the posterior teeth was the real clue of the GERD condition rather than an eating disorder or other cause.

Successful treatment of the medical condition is required before oral health care rehabilitation can be initiated with results. The dental hygienist is a good first defence in oral health.

Mara took the advice to heart and got medical attention. She is already feeling better with no more sour taste in her mouth, no more painful belching and the burning sensation is under control. She makes sure she sees her dental hygienist regularly.

**Mara's mouth tells a new story now.**