

What Is a Caries Risk Assessment?

Caries Risk Assessments (CRA) are a way for dentists to measure the chances of patients getting new cavities. They will use things like health care, diet, medical history, and anything that might affect a person's chances of getting a cavity. When there are more bad habits than good habits, the patient is at more risk of getting new cavities.

High Risk

- At high risk of developing new cavities
- Patient has cavities showing or only just taken care of by a dentist

Moderate Risk

- At moderate risk of getting new cavities
- Has more factors that help cause new cavities than help against new cavities
- Most people are at this risk level
- Often the patient has a history of cavities, but have none at the moment

Low Risk

- At low risk of developing new cavities
- Has more factors helping against new cavities
- No promise of a cavity-free future; Person still needs to maintain the protective risk factors

Risk Factors

- Poor oral care habits
- Regular eating of food or drinks with sugar
- Low contact with fluoride
- Low socioeconomic status
- Dry mouth caused by medications or disease
- Physical and/or mental disabilities
- Brushing and other dental care can be difficult
- Existing fillings, retainers, or braces are common sites for new cavities

Protective Factors

- Good daily dental care habits that include fluoride toothpaste and flossing
- Regular professional dental care
- Fluoride rinses, gels, or varnishes
- Sealants (protective coating) on adult teeth

Better habits like watching your diet and seeing a dentist twice a year can help you lower your risk. Seeing a dental professional can help you have better oral health and less cavities in the future.



****Disclaimer:** This assessment cannot tell you about every part of a person's health. It is still very important to have an exam with your dentist and hear what they may have to say. More assessments may be needed for those with health concerns. It is best to think of this as a starting point for a person's better long term health.