Classification of dental caries

Caries can be classified by location, etiology, rate of progression, and affected hard tissues. These forms of classification can be used to characterize a particular case of tooth decay in order to more accurately represent the condition to others and also indicate the severity of tooth destruction. In some instances, caries is described in other ways that might indicate the cause. Usually it simply can be divided into five tooth surfaces: occlusal side, labial side (buccal side), lingual side (palatal side), mesial side, and distal side. The G.V. Black classification is another one can describe the location of the caries.

“The G.V. Black classification”

Class I - occlusal surfaces of posterior teeth, buccal or lingual pits on molars, lingual pit near cingulum of maxillary incisors
Class II - proximal surfaces of posterior teeth
Class III - interproximal surfaces of anterior teeth without incisal edge involvement
Class IV - interproximal surfaces of anterior teeth with incisal edge involvement
Class V - cervical third of facial or lingual surface of tooth
Class VI - incisal or occlusal edge worn away due to attrition

Dentist can easily communicate with each other by this classification, and this one also indicates the difficulty of restoration. The other classification is according to the affected tissue of teeth.
(1) Enamel caries - asymptomatic, only the color changed, early detection, and early restoration has a good prognosis.
(2) Dentin caries – when caries penetrates to dentin, patient will be sensitive or even soreness to cold, hot, and even sweet food. Treatment should be as soon as possible, so as not to affect the pulp.
(3) Caries irritates the pulp - causes inflammation of the pulp, very painful, have to do root canal therapy.

For prevention of dental caries, we have to brush our teeth after meals, reduce sugar intake, and use fluorides. It is recommended every six months to see a dentist to check dentition regularly.