

Do you have Gum Disease? Are you sure?



See your
dentist
regularly.

Nine in ten adults will experience Gum Disease. What can you do to prevent it?

Watch out! Bleeding, swollen, tender or receding gums, constant bad breath, bad taste in your mouth, loose shifting teeth... all of these are signs of gum disease, which is also known as periodontal disease.

Healthy gums and bones hold our teeth firmly in place. The gums actually attach to the tooth just below the visible edge of the gum, and gum disease affects these attachments.

You may have gum disease right now and not even know it. Nine out of ten adults will develop gum disease sometime in their lives. It is the most common adult dental problem and is a major cause of adult tooth loss.

How it happens

Gum disease begins with plaque, an invisible bacterial film that builds up on the teeth, creating toxins (poisons) that irritate the gums, which then become inflamed and bleed easily. This plaque forms at and just below the visible edge of the gum. This early stage of gum disease is called gingivitis.

If plaque is not removed every day by brushing and flossing. It hardens into tartar (also called calculus).

Calculus attaches like a barnacle on the hull of a ship, making it very difficult to remove. If not removed, more toxins are produced and pockets (spaces between the teeth and gums) develop. These become breeding grounds for infection. The gums may get puffy, traces of blood may be found on your toothbrush or the gums may change colour. Despite this, there will probably be no discomfort!

Over time, infection destroys the gum tissue that attaches to the tooth — this is called attachment loss.

At this point, you may notice swollen, bleeding or differently coloured gums, but the real damage is not invisible to the naked eye. This stage of gum disease is called periodontitis.

Along with attachment loss, gum disease causes the bone that holds the teeth in place to break down. Eventually, so much attachment and bone are lost that teeth become loose and are in danger of falling out.

Plaque

Sticky plaque quickly builds and hardens into calculus, or tartar — a rough, cement-like deposit that breeds bacteria.

Pocket

When bacteria multiply, their toxins damage tissue around teeth causing the gums to pull away. Pockets form and collect even more plaque.

Bone loss

The pockets grow deeper as gum disease advances. If plaque spreads to the roots of the teeth, it can permanently damage supporting bones. Teeth can become loose and will eventually fall out.

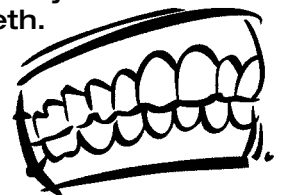
Signs and symptoms

Even though adult gum disease is usually not painful there are some signs and symptoms to look for:

- gums that bleed every time you brush or floss
- gums that are red around the base of the teeth
- chronic bad breath
- a bad taste in your mouth
- a feeling of pressure between the teeth after eating
- shiny, red, puffy or sore gums

If your gums have always bled when you brush, then you may have always had some form of gum disease. Just as you can scrub healthy finger nails without any bleeding, healthy gums should not bleed when brushed.

**To find out more
about gum disease,
talk to your dentist.
We care about you
and your teeth.**



This information courtesy of your Manitoba Dentist