

## Gingivitis and Periodontitis (Gum Disease)

Gum disease is an infection of the tissues that surround and support your teeth. It is a major cause of tooth loss in adults. Because gum disease is usually painless, you may not know you have it. Also referred to as periodontal disease, gum disease is caused by plaque, the sticky film of bacteria that is constantly forming on our teeth.

### Here are some warning signs that can signal a problem:

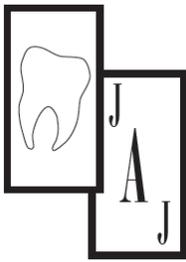
- gums that bleed easily
- red, swollen, tender gums
- gums that have pulled away from the teeth
- persistent bad breath or bad taste
- permanent teeth that are loose or separating
- any change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- any change in the fit of partial dentures

### Some factors increase the risk of developing gum disease. They are:

- poor oral hygiene
- smoking or chewing tobacco
- genetics
- crooked teeth that are hard to keep clean
- pregnancy
- diabetes
- medications, including steroids, certain types of anti-epilepsy drugs, cancer therapy drugs, some calcium channel blockers and oral contraceptives

The sooner you treat gum disease it the better. The early stage of gum disease is called gingivitis. If you have gingivitis, your gums may become red, swollen and bleed easily. At this stage, the disease is **still reversible** and can usually be eliminated by a professional cleaning at your dental office, followed by daily brushing and flossing.

Advanced gum disease is called Periodontitis. Chronic Periodontitis can lead to the loss of tissue and bone that support the teeth and it may become more severe over time. If it does, your teeth will feel loose and start moving around in your mouth. This is the most common form of Periodontitis in adults but can occur at any age. It usually gets worse slowly, but there can be periods of rapid progression.

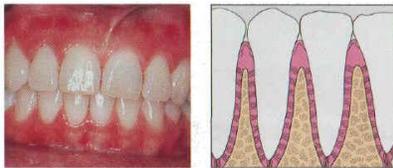


Aggressive periodontitis is a highly destructive form of periodontal disease that occurs in patients who are otherwise healthy. Common features include rapid loss of tissue and bone and may occur in some areas of the mouth, or in the entire mouth.

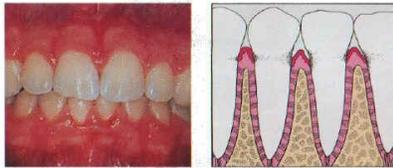
Research between systemic diseases and periodontal diseases is ongoing. While a link is not conclusive, some studies indicate that severe gum disease may be associated with several other health conditions such as diabetes or stroke.

It is possible to have gum disease and have no warning signs. That is one reason why regular dental checkups and periodontal examinations are very important. Treatment methods depend upon the type of disease and how far the condition has progressed. Good dental care at home is essential to help keep periodontal disease from becoming more serious or recurring.

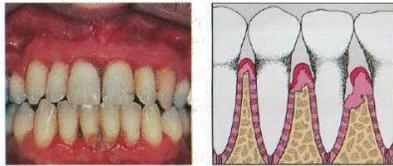
**1. Normal, Healthy Gingiva (Gums)**  
Healthy gums and bone anchor teeth firmly in place.



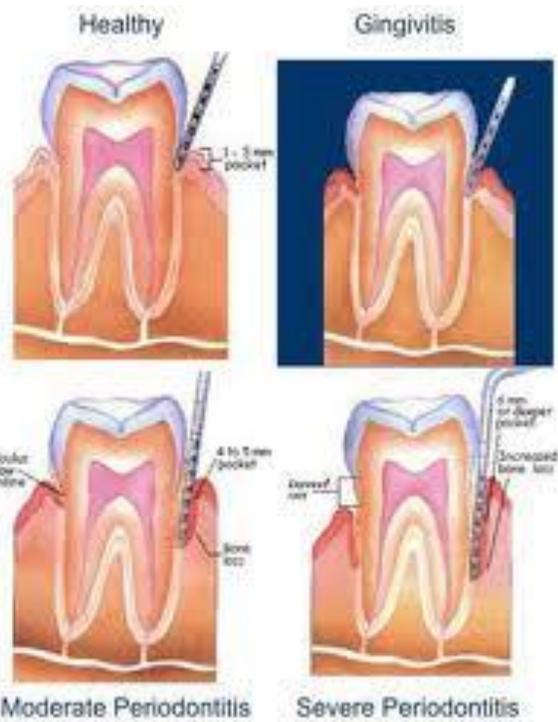
**2. Gingivitis**  
Plaque and its byproducts irritate the gums, making them tender, inflamed, and likely to bleed.

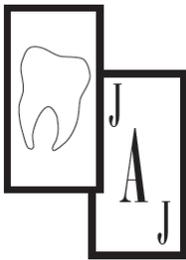


**3. Periodontitis**  
Unremoved, plaque hardens into calculus (tartar). As plaque and calculus continue to build up, the gums begin to recede (pull away) from the teeth, and pockets form between the teeth and gums.



**4. Advanced Periodontitis**  
The gums recede farther, destroying more bone and the periodontal ligament. Teeth—even healthy teeth—may become loose and need to be extracted.





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**1. Alzheimer's, Cognitive Memory**  
Alzheimer's patients have a significantly higher amount of antibodies and inflammatory molecules associated with periodontal disease in their blood stream.

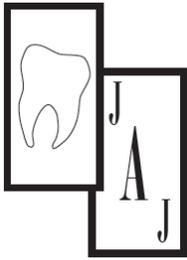
**2. Heart Disease**  
Certain bacteria found in an inflamed mouth have been found in arterial plaque and have been known to alter clotting in the blood stream.

**3. Diabetes**  
Gum disease has an adverse effect on controlling blood sugar levels and studies show periodontal disease increases the risk for Diabetes complications.

**4. Pregnancy, Health of the Fetus**  
Gum disease present in the expecting mother can lead to low birthweights and premature birth.

**5. Overall Inflammation**  
Studies indicate that gum disease may add to overall inflammation in the body by raising C-reactive protein index.

## How Gum Disease affects the body



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