



Frequently Asked Questions about Gum (Periodontal) Disease

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In this article we answer some of the most frequently asked questions about gums and gum disease.

Is it normal for my gums to bleed when I brush my teeth?

No, bleeding gums are one of the signs of gum disease. Think of gum tissue as the skin on your hand. If your hands bled every time you washed them, you would know something was wrong.

What is periodontal disease?

Periodontal disease (gum disease) is often silent, meaning symptoms may not appear until an advanced stage of the disease. However, warning signs of periodontal disease include red, swollen or tender gums; bleeding while brushing, flossing, or eating hard food; or other types of pain in your mouth.

Additional warning signs may include:

- loose or separating teeth
- pus between your gums and teeth
- sores in your mouth
- persistent bad breath
- a change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- a change in the fit of partial dentures
- gums that are receding or pulling away from the teeth



If calculus is not removed during a professional cleaning, and it remains below your gum line, the bacteria in the calculus can destroy your gum tissue and cause your gums to pull away from your teeth. When this happens, gum disease pockets form and fill with disease-causing bacteria. If left untreated, periodontal disease will progress. This progression will cause spaces or “pockets” between your teeth and gums to develop and grow deeper. These pockets allow bacteria to be present that destroy gum tissue and supporting bone. As a result, the gums may shrink away from the teeth, making them look longer. Without treatment, your teeth may become loose and painful, or may even fall out.

What are the different types of Gum Disease?

Untreated gingivitis can advance to periodontitis and eventually lead to tooth loss and other health problems. Periodontal disease is a chronic bacterial infection that affects the gums and bone supporting the tooth or teeth. It begins when the bacteria in plaque (the sticky, colourless film that constantly forms on your teeth) cause the gums to become inflamed.