



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
GUM DISEASE

STAGES OF GUM DISEASE

Referenced in toothpaste commercials and mouthwash advertisements, and discussed in dental offices around the globe, the term “gum disease” has become part of the modern vernacular. A concrete understanding of what causes this disease along with proper treatment and maintenance can ultimately determine the longevity of your oral health. Though given its casual mention in many settings, this progressive condition has the potential to wreak havoc on the oral cavity and numerous systemic functions. Read on to learn what you need to know regarding gum disease.

THE STAGES OF GUM DISEASE

Gum disease is categorized based on the level of attachment loss between a tooth and its surrounding gum tissues along with the amount of bone that has been destroyed. Gingivitis is the least sinister of the stages, as this phase is the earliest and is characterized by inflamed, bleeding tissues, but no loss of attachment.

When loss of bone has occurred and the connection between the teeth and gums has been negatively affected, the stage of periodontitis has begun – the effects of which are irreversible. Advanced periodontitis results when a significant amount of bone and attachment loss have occurred and the outcome is tooth mobility.



GUM DISEASE & ORAL HEALTH

The gums and supporting jaw bone provide a foundation for the teeth. Gum disease, more formerly termed “periodontal disease,” is caused by numerous types of bacteria present in the mouth. These harmful bacteria produce toxins that in turn initiate the destruction of bone and tissues that support the teeth. If enough of the supportive structures are destroyed, the risk of tooth loss becomes imminent. Periodontal disease is the primary cause of adult tooth loss today.



A cure for gum disease has yet to be discovered; but through diligent home care and proper maintenance, this destructive oral condition can be managed. If you are experiencing any signs or symptoms of gum disease, or are concerned about your risks for developing this infection, schedule an appointment with your dentist for a periodontal screening and evaluation today.

GUM DISEASE & SYSTEMIC HEALTH

A great deal of research has been conducted over the years to learn more about the relationship between gum disease and systemic health. Studies have found that individuals having gum disease are at higher risk for heart complications, diabetes, low birth weights and pre-term deliveries, and certain types of cancers, among other conditions. It goes without saying that the healthier the mouth, the healthier the body. The inverse also appears to be true in many instances.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF GUM DISEASE

Pain is the most obvious symptom for many bodily conditions. However, pain is not typically a symptom of gum disease until the disease has progressed to the point of abscess and extreme tooth mobility.



- Bleeding while brushing or flossing
- Swelling, redness, and inflammation
- Halitosis (oral malodor)

More advanced symptoms of this oral condition include exudate (pus) accumulation between the teeth and gums, gum recession, and tooth mobility.



EARLY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF GUM DISEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:



RISK FACTORS FOR GUM DISEASE

You may be at risk of developing gum disease if any of the following characteristics apply to you:

- Poor oral hygiene habits
- Genetic predisposition to the condition
- Tobacco use (smoking and smokeless)
- Ill-fitting tooth restorations or appliances
- Bruxism (clenching or grinding of the teeth)
- Uncontrolled diabetes, heart disease, and rheumatoid arthritis
- Any condition that impacts immunity and the body's inflammatory response