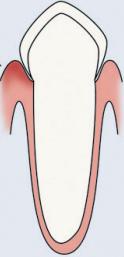


Gum (periodontal) disease

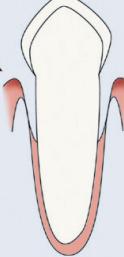


SIGNS, SYMPTOMS & CAUSES

Swollen
Inflamed
Gums



Deep
Pocket



Gingivitis. The gums are swollen due to bacteria from plaque and tartar on the teeth. With gingivitis, the gums are red and bleed easily.

Periodontitis. This is swelling around the tooth. It occurs when gingivitis is not treated. With periodontitis, pockets form between the gums and teeth. These expose teeth at the gum line. When left untreated, plaque grows below the gum line. Gums, bones, and connective tissue that support the teeth are destroyed. This can cause permanent teeth to separate from each other and loosen. Teeth may even need to be removed.



TREATMENT

Gum disease should be treated by a periodontist or a dentist who treats this problem. Material called tartar can form, even when normal brushing and flossing are done. The dentist or dental hygienist can remove tartar on a regular basis. Treatment may also include:

- Deep cleaning (scaling and root planing)
- Medications
- Surgical treatments. These include flap surgery and bone and tissue grafts.

TRIAGE QUESTIONS

Do you have any of these problems?

- Red or swollen gums that are tender or that bleed easily.
- Roots are exposed at the gum line.
- Loose permanent teeth or teeth that separate from each other.
- Pus around the gums and teeth.
- Bad breath and/or a foul taste in the mouth that doesn't go away.

NO

YES

SEE DOCTOR/DENTIST

USE SELF-CARE



SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

- See your dentist as often as advised. Follow their advice for medication, teeth brushing and flossing, and using other dental instruments.
- Don't smoke. If you smoke, quit!
- Limit sugary foods. When you eat sweets, do so with meals, not in between meals. Finish a meal with cheese. This tends to neutralize acids that form.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- Include foods with good sources of vitamin A and vitamin C daily. Vitamin A is found in cantaloupe, broccoli, spinach, winter squash, and dairy products fortified with vitamin A. Good sources of vitamin C are oranges, tomatoes, potatoes, green peppers, and broccoli.