

# Take care of bleeding gums



Bleeding gums are never a good thing. If you notice small amounts of blood when you brush or floss, it's a signal there's a problem. Thankfully, there are effective treatments for many common triggers of gum bleeding.

The two most common causes are plaque buildup and gum disease. But, whatever the cause, you should address the underlying issue right away to protect the health of your gums and teeth.

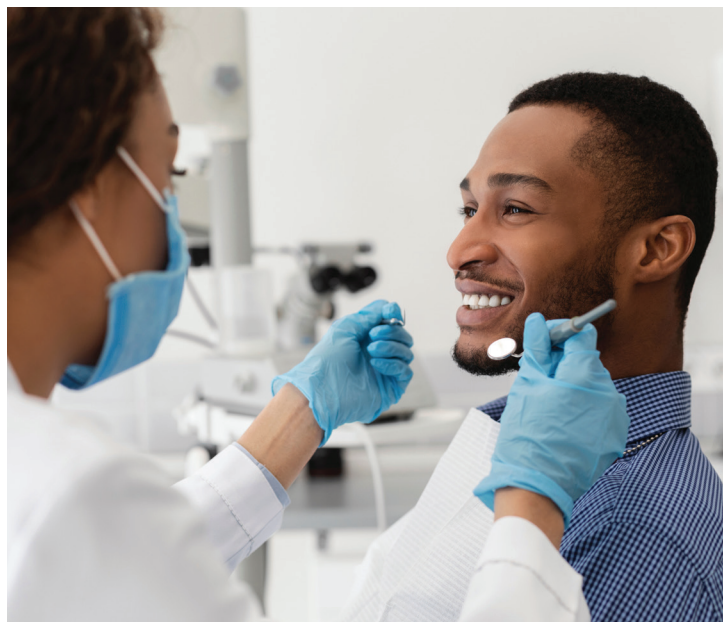


## CAUSES OF GUM BLEEDING

In many cases, gums bleed when there is underlying inflammation of the gum tissue. Inflammation can happen for a variety of reasons.

- Plaque buildup
- Brushing too hard
- Poor flossing
- Tooth or gum infection
- Pregnancy hormone changes
- Gum disease
- Ill-fitting dental appliances
- Vitamins K or C deficiency
- Certain medications

Occasionally, bleeding gums may be a sign of a more serious underlying problem, such as a bleeding disorder. Visit your primary care doctor for follow-up if your dentist is unable to find a cause for the bleeding.



## WHAT TO DO

**Visit the dentist.** Regular dentist visits and professional cleanings are key to preventing gum disease and plaque buildup. Talk to your dentist about gum bleeding and always follow their recommendations for oral hygiene.

**Brush twice daily.** There is no substitute for routine brushing to rid your teeth of plaque. Plaque is made up of sticky bacteria that irritate the gums. If your gums bleed when you brush, be gentle but thorough.

**Floss every day.** Floss gets into the tight spaces your toothbrush can't reach. Lack of flossing or poor technique could result in plaque buildup around the gum line and gingivitis, a major culprit of gum bleeding.

## HEALTHY HABITS, HEALTHY GUMS

Many daily habits impact the overall health of your gums. For good long-term oral health, follow these healthy lifestyle habits.

- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables
- Limit added sugar in your diet
- Avoid tobacco and drug use
- Drink water instead of sugary beverages
- Ask your dentist if a mouthwash is right for you