

maintaining healthy gums....

Gum disease describes swelling, soreness or infection of the tissues around the teeth. It causes destruction of the tissue and bone that support your teeth and, if left untreated, may loosen them to the point where they fall out.

The primary cause of gum disease is plaque, an adhesive layer that forms from food debris. When plaque is not removed it hardens up into tartar (calculus) - an ideal home for the bacteria which cause gum disease. Bacteria in the plaque and tartar secrete toxins that cause infection and destroy the gums and bone that support the teeth. In addition, your body produces substances that destroy infected gum and bone as well as killing the bacteria.

Most people suffer from some form of gum disease, however, the disease develops slowly in most people and it can be slowed down to a rate that should allow you to keep most of your teeth for life. Unfortunately, because gum disease progresses painlessly, most people do not notice the damage it is doing and over a number of years the bone supporting the teeth can be lost. The longer the teeth are left untreated, the more complex treatment can become.

Regular dental check-ups are very important as this is where your gum condition can be assessed and, if necessary, treated are very important because regular professional cleaning combined with your home care will help maintain a healthy mouth. A clean and healthy mouth will improve your appearance, help you keep your teeth and give you fresh breath. There are also several general health benefits. Gum disease is related to your general health in several ways:

- ❖ Smokers are up to 7 times more prone to gum disease than non-smokers.
- ❖ Diabetics are more prone to gum disease and uncontrolled infections can make it more difficult to control their blood sugar levels. They have to work much harder than non-diabetics do to maintain healthy gums.
- ❖ Recent studies have shown that people with gum disease may be at increased risk from coronary heart disease.
- ❖ Some drugs used to control heart conditions and epilepsy can make you more prone to developing puffy, swollen gums that are more difficult to keep clean. Your dentist or hygienist can advise you on these.
- ❖ People who suffer from blocked noses and have to breathe through their mouths frequently are more prone to developing gingivitis, particularly on their upper front teeth, if you suffer from this you will need to work harder to keep your gums healthy.
- ❖ People who take steroids, particularly inhalers, will also need to work harder to keep their gums healthy as the steroids dampen down their immune response and stop them fighting gum disease as well as people who don't need to use them.

DUNS DENTAL PRACTICE

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Monday	09:00 - 18:30
Tuesday	08:30 - 18:00
Wednesday	09:00 - 18:00
Thursday	08:00 - 18:00
Friday	09:00 - 17:00

Please note that the practice is closed
between 13:00 - 14:00 daily



The first step in the treatment of gum disease is to have tartar cleaned professionally by a dentist or hygienist (scaling). Dental hygienists are specially trained to work with the dentist in providing dental health care and especially preventing disease. They will work with your dentist to provide care tailored to your needs.

Their main role is to provide professional cleaning of your teeth (scaling and polishing). The aim of scaling is to remove the buildup of plaque and tartar from the surface of the teeth and smooth the roots to enable treatment of the pocket area (below the gums).

Scaling and polishing is usually pain free. However, if you do experience some discomfort the hygienist can eliminate this with the use of local anesthetic or by changing the method of cleaning. You are more likely to experience discomfort if there has already been a lot of damage done by gum disease or if your gums are inflamed and it is therefore very important that you let the hygienist know at the time so that some pain control can be given. It is very important that we remove these deposits to help you keep your gums and teeth healthy for life.

You may experience slight discomfort or sensitivity to hot and cold for a few days after treatment, especially if large deposits of tartar have been removed from below your gums. Mild analgesics will relieve this if required and your dentist or hygienist may also recommend special gels or toothpaste to minimise this.

The hygienist's most important role is to help you find the best way to keep your teeth, and the spaces between them, free of plaque buildup in future. This will include:

- ✓ Twice daily brushing with fluoride toothpaste after breakfast and before sleep, for a minimum of 2 minutes each time.
- ✓ Once daily cleaning of the spaces in between your teeth as demonstrated by your dentist or hygienist.

The dentist and hygienist may also suggest changes to your diet and habits, such as smoking, to help reduce the risks of gum disease. Occasionally, other chemical treatments may be suggested to help decrease the number of harmful bacteria present.

Periodontal disease is never "cured". If, however, you keep up the home care you have been taught, attend regularly for checkups and cleaning and inform your dentist and hygienist of any changes in the condition of your gums, any further loss of bone should be very slow and it may stop altogether.

Please note that gum disease may sometimes be present without any symptoms and most people feel no pain.

Symptoms of gum disease include - Bleeding while cleaning your teeth, red/reddish gums, swelling, unpleasant odour/taste from the mouth, loosening of the teeth, receding gums and exposure of the neck of the tooth