

# Gum Disease

It hides in your mouth, destroying gum tissues and teeth, and it can lead to strokes, heart attacks, and pregnancy complications. If you don't think you have gum disease, simply know that conservative estimates report that up to 80 percent of the population unknowingly has gum disease in some form.

70 percent of adult tooth loss is attributed to gum disease. Recent research shows a link between patients who have gum disease and those who suffer from strokes, heart attacks, or complications with diabetes or pregnancy. Gum disease is silent in that early symptoms may be painless and mild, like swollen gums or bleeding while brushing. Regular dental checkups are vital because a professional can detect, treat, and reverse gum disease in early stages before major problems arise.

## Cause and Effect

Several factors contribute to periodontal disease: plaque buildup, heredity, and lifestyle choices. By far, the most common and controllable factor is bacterial plaque—the sticky, colorless film produced by normal oral bacteria. Bacteria release toxins that break down the natural fibers that bond gums to teeth. When this occurs, pockets between the gums and teeth form, and more bacteria and toxins hide, flourish, and destroy your gums and teeth. Over time, this process can affect not only gums, teeth, and bone within the mouth, but also overall health. Bacteria in your mouth will be inadvertently ingested, and this can compromise your whole-body health.

## Maintaining Good Periodontal Health

Regular dental visits at least every six months allow us to keep a watchful eye on the health of your gums. You should also brush twice a day, floss once a day, and use good mouth rinses at home. We will recommend the products that will optimize your oral homecare, and we can also show you the best methods for brushing and flossing. If you have overcome periodontal disease, we will recommend frequent checkups to ensure your mouth stays healthy for a lifetime.