

Factsheet

Gum disease

There are two main types of gum disease; gingivitis and periodontitis.

Gingivitis

Gingivitis is the most common type of gum disease.

Poor oral hygiene lets bacteria collect on the teeth around the gums.

This can make the gums inflamed. Inflamed gums may look puffy and bleed when brushing.

Bleeding gums are a sign of disease. Healthy gums do not bleed.

How is gingivitis treated?

Gingivitis can be treated by improving teeth cleaning at home every day. This includes brushing and cleaning between the teeth. A professional dental clean by a dentist may also be needed.

Periodontitis

Periodontitis is a severe type of gum disease. It is also called periodontal disease.

Periodontitis is caused by destructive mouth bacteria. The bone that holds the teeth in place is lost. This can create 'pockets' around the teeth. These pockets are spaces under the gums where more bacteria can collect. Sometimes the gums will pull away from the teeth. This is called gum recession.

How is periodontitis treated?

Treatment by a dentist or gum specialist, called a periodontist, is needed. If periodontitis is not treated, teeth may need to be removed.

Common symptoms

- Gums pulling away from the teeth
- Teeth become loose
- Bad breath
- Puffy gums
- Bleeding gums when brushing the teeth

What increases your risk?

- Poor oral hygiene
- Medical conditions, such as diabetes
- Past or current smoking habits
- A family history of periodontitis

Watch this video
on what causes
gum disease

