



## The treatment of gum disease

Attending regular examinations with us will allow treatment of gingivitis in its early stages and help prevent it developing into the much more serious periodontal disease. Remember that a thorough at-home brushing and flossing routine is also very important, because correct brushing eliminates plaque from the surface of the teeth, and flossing takes care of plaque between the teeth and under the gum line.

During a standard check up, we will remove plaque and tartar from above and below the gum line of all your teeth. If signs of gingivitis are detected, we may recommend more regular cleaning appointments, show you the correct technique to brush your teeth and gums or suggest that you use a toothpaste or mouth rinse that is approved for fighting gingivitis. We may also recommend a procedure called scaling and root planing, which will thoroughly remove plaque and tartar from above and below the gum line.

By taking good care of your mouth at home and being aware of the early signs of gum disease, you can be sure your smile will look great and stay healthy for years to come.



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## GUM DISEASE



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## Good oral health equals teeth for life

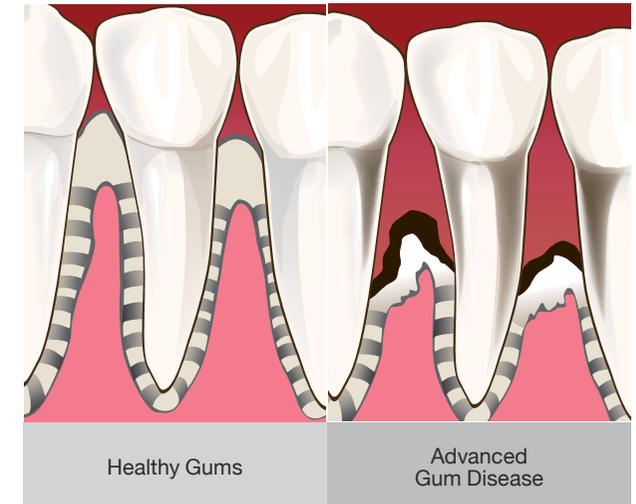
The maintenance of good oral health is one of the most important things you can do to ensure you keep your natural teeth for life. Brushing twice a day, flossing once a day and attending regular appointments with your dentist will ensure you have the best dental health.

One of the most common oral health issues is gum disease, the number one cause of tooth loss. Gum disease affects not only your gums, but also jaw bone and joints which are the critical support structures of your teeth. It is indicated by red, swollen gums that bleed easily when you brush and floss your teeth.

Clinical research also links gum disease with other serious medical conditions such as heart disease, increased risk of stroke, and diabetes. Fortunately, we can provide treatment to help prevent gum disease and improve your overall oral health.



Gum disease is a common dental problem that affects most people at some stage during their life, and is one of the leading causes of tooth loss for Australian adults. You can avoid gum disease through maintaining good gum health, lowering your chances of tooth loss and avoiding bleeding gums and bad breath.



Gum disease is usually caused by a build-up of plaque on your teeth, which is why careful and regular cleaning of your teeth and gums every day is so important. Quitting smoking and drinking plenty of water to increase your saliva production are also great ways to improve your oral health. It's important to seek treatment early, which can help save teeth that are at risk from gum disease and other problems.

The two main degrees of gum disease are gingivitis and periodontitis.

### Gingivitis

Gingivitis is inflammation of the gums caused by a build up of plaque and calculus on your teeth close to the gums. This causes irritation, swelling and redness, and the tendency to often bleed when brushed or flossed. Healthy gums should not bleed.

When treated early, gingivitis is usually totally reversible. This involves removing the plaque and calculus that cause the irritation, together with oral hygiene instruction for the correct at-home brushing and flossing routine. Six monthly professional cleans with us, either by a dentist or hygienist, are also vital.

### Periodontal Disease

A much more serious and advanced form of gum disease is called periodontal disease. When plaque is left untreated, it starts to harden into calculus, or tartar which is an ideal breeding ground for further bacteria. This bacteria increases inflammation of the gums, creating pockets down the sides of your teeth which become even more ideal growth sites for bacteria.

These new pockets are much more difficult to clean. This allows bacteria to begin to inflame and destroy the ligaments and bone supporting your teeth, eventually resulting in teeth becoming loose and causing tooth loss.

Periodontal disease cannot be cured or totally reversed; only successfully managed. Plaque and calculus removal will need to be strictly controlled with meticulous oral hygiene techniques at home and together with up to four professional cleans by your dentist or hygienist every year.

Without these control measures, periodontal disease will lead to progressive shrinking of the gums and bone loss, leading to pain, loose teeth and eventually tooth loss.

