

Gingivitis

Gingivitis (inflammation of the gums) is the initial stage of gum disease and the easiest to treat. Without treatment, gingivitis can lead to periodontal disease (gum disease) and the loosening and loss of numerous teeth.

What Causes Gingivitis?

The direct cause of gingivitis is plaque - the soft, sticky, colourless film of bacteria that forms constantly on the teeth and gums.

If the plaque is not removed by daily brushing and flossing, it produces toxins (poisons) that can irritate the gum tissue, causing gingivitis. At this early stage in gum disease, damage can be reversed, since the bone and tissue that hold the teeth in place are not yet affected. Typically a professional clean is required at this stage along with oral hygiene at home. Left untreated, however, gingivitis can become periodontitis (gum disease) and cause permanent damage to your teeth and jaw.



As plaque is colourless, seemingly clean appearing teeth may still be covered in gingivitis causing plaque

How do I Know I Have Gingivitis?

Classic signs and symptoms of gingivitis include:

- red, swollen, tender gums
- gums which bleed when you brush
- Receded gums which have pulled away from your teeth, giving your teeth an elongated appearance.

- The formation of pockets between the teeth and gums, where plaque and food debris collect
- Some people may experience recurring bad breath or a bad taste in their mouth, even if the disease is not advanced.

Gingivitis typically does not cause pain despite the presence of active disease.



Gingivitis (Swollen and Bleeding Gums)

How can I Prevent Gingivitis?

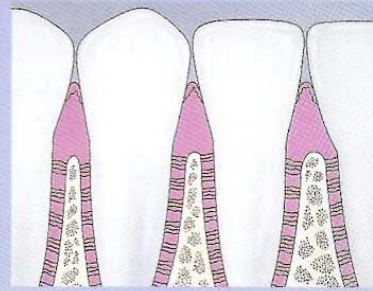
Good oral hygiene is essential which includes both brushing and flossing. Professional cleanings are also extremely important because once plaque has hardened and built up, or become tartar (hardened plaque), only a dentist or dental hygienist can remove it.

As plaque and tartar continually build up with time, the time between professional cleans should be no more than 12 months. Neglect and diet are the biggest causes of dental problems and gum disease.

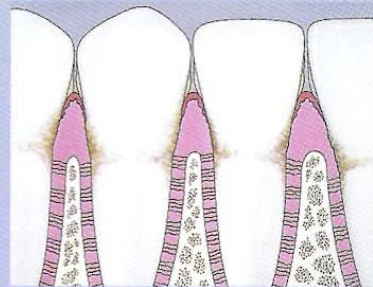
You can help stop gingivitis before it develops by:

- Proper brushing and flossing to remove plaque and debris and control tartar buildup
- Eating right to ensure proper nutrition for your jawbone and teeth e.g. minimise snacking and sugary foods
- Avoiding cigarettes and other forms of tobacco
- Scheduling regular dental examinations no more than a year apart

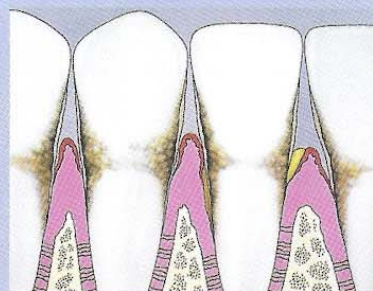
Stages from Gingivitis to Periodontitis (Gum Disease)



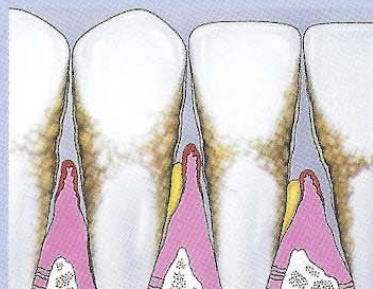
Healthy gingiva (gum tissue), periodontal ligament and bone anchor teeth firmly in place.



Gingivitis develops as toxins, enzymes, and other plaque byproducts irritate the gums, making them tender, swollen and likely to bleed easily.



Periodontitis occurs when plaque byproducts destroy the tissues that anchor teeth in the bone. As the disease progresses, pockets form, which allow more plaque to collect below the gum line. Tooth roots are exposed and become susceptible to decay and sensitive to cold and touch.



In advanced periodontitis, the teeth lose more support as the disease continues to destroy the periodontal ligament and bone. Unless treated, the affected teeth frequently become loose and may fall out or require removal by a dentist.