

PERIODONTAL (GUM) DISEASE INFORMATION

What is periodontal disease?

Periodontal disease, or gum disease as it's often called, occurs in the gum and bone around the teeth. Some people are more susceptible to gum disease than others, and while inherited factors are involved, good home dental hygiene is always the key to managing it.

If gum disease is left untreated, gaps called pockets can form between the gums and the teeth and supporting bone is lost. Eventually teeth can become loose, drift, or move due to the bone loss and may have to be removed, or fall out.

What causes gum disease?

The build up of plaque on the teeth is the cause of gum disease. Plaque is constantly forming on your teeth and harbours bacteria. Tartar, or calculus, is a hard scale which builds up at or under the gum line and on your teeth; this harbours more plaque. Tartar can only be removed by a dentist, hygienist or dental therapist.

Symptoms to look out for.

Gum disease is often painless, and may, especially in the early stages only cause bleeding, red, swollen or tender gums. Other symptoms include loose teeth, an unpleasant taste in your mouth and bad breath. Regular dental check-ups are important because although you might not notice any signs of gum disease, your dentist will notice them.

If you smoke you may not have any obvious symptoms of gum disease, but it may still be progressing.

Who gets gum disease?

Anyone can get gum disease, but some people have a greater than average genetic risk. If you smoke, or vape, you are more likely to suffer from gum disease or to experience the more severe forms of it. Smokers have also been found to heal more slowly and not heal well.

Diabetics and people under stress or with other medical conditions can also be at higher risk of gum disease.

Your treatment.

Your specific treatment will depend on how advanced the gum disease is, but it will involve removing plaque and tartar (calculus) from above and below the gum. Complications can arise from treatment, such as sensitivity, incomplete healing and, rarely, a gum abscess. Your dentist and hygienist will discuss your treatment needs and any ongoing concerns.

The hygienist and/or oral health advisor will also help with improving your oral hygiene, which is so critical to the treatment of gum disease.

Avoiding gum disease.

Removing plaque regularly is the best course of action. Thoroughly brush your teeth twice a day and clean between your teeth by using dental tape, Tepe brushes and other methods of cleaning in between your teeth. Your dentist, hygienist or dental therapist will help you find the best methods and monitor your cleaning standards.

The highest standards of daily tooth and gum cleaning are required to stop or manage gum disease.

Please do not hesitate to contact the practice or ask any member of staff for further information and/or advice.