



YOUR MOUTH IS A VERY BUSY PLACE

The mouth is a very busy place with millions of bacteria constantly on the move. Some bacteria are harmless; other bacteria contained in human tartar and plaque constantly attacks our teeth and gums. **No wonder more than 75% of Americans over age 35 have Gum Disease.** In its early stage, gums swell and bleed. Without daily and professional dental care, teeth fall out! The entire body can be affected by gum disease, which is often called gingivitis. **To keep teeth and to stay healthy as long as possible, Teeth and Gums must be cared for.**

The bottom line?

**If you want to keep your teeth,
You must take care of your whole mouth!!**

Some health professionals write about gingivitis (gum disease) affecting our hearts and lungs by causing infections which those organs may not be able to fight. People with diabetes and/or heart disease may be at higher risk of infections such as gingivitis.

SYMPTOMS OF GUM DISEASE

- Gums that bleed during and after tooth brushing
- Red, swollen, and tender gums
- Bad breath or a bad taste in the mouth
- Gums pulling away from the teeth
- Deep pockets between teeth and gums
- Loose or shifting teeth
- Changes in the way teeth fit together or the way partial dentures fit

WHAT DO I DO TO PREVENT GUM DISEASE?

- Make sure you see a dentist or dental hygienist at least twice a year – some gum disease may be around teeth in the back of the mouth that cannot be seen except by a dental professional.
- Floss! It not only removes food particles, it disorganizes/upsets TARTAR and PLAQUE which contain bacteria & toxins...The REAL CAUSE OF GINGIVITIS.
- Brush your tongue without toothpaste



What happens if the dentist or hygienist finds a problem?

Possible treatments include:

- Proper flossing, brushing, and perhaps “swishing” for 60 seconds once a day with an oral Fluoride/Antiseptic rinse
- Non-surgical dental treatments that control the growth of harmful bacteria
- Oral surgery to restore healthy gum tissues
- New drugs and dental rinses that contain antimicrobials (“germ busters”) can be ordered by medical or dental professionals

What should I look for to make sure the person I support does not have gum disease?

Jot down the person’s answers or your observations to the following questions to find out if the person you support might have gum disease:

- Do you ever have pain in your mouth?
- Do your gums ever bleed when you brush your teeth or when you eat hard food?
- Have you noticed any spaces developing between your teeth?
- Do your gums ever feel swollen or tender?
- Have you noticed that your gums are receding (pulling back from your teeth) or your teeth appear longer than before?
- Do you often have bad breath?
- Have you noticed pus between your teeth and gums?
- Have you noticed any change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite?
- Do you ever develop sores in your mouth?

**If the answer to any of these questions is YES,
consult a dentist/dental hygienist NOW!**

More information can be found on the following DDD websites:

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/Publications/22-335.pdf>

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/word/adsa/ddd/Dental-Songbook.rtf>

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ddd/hygienists.shtml>