



Combating the Effects of Gum Disease

Look for these warning signs that you may have gum disease:

- Gums that bleed easily when you brush your teeth or floss
- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Gums that have pulled away from your teeth
- Persistent bad breath that doesn't go away
- Loose or separating teeth
- Changes in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- A change in the fit of partial dentures

If you notice any of these warning signs, let your dentist know. The earlier you detect the problem, the better.

Often called periodontal disease, gum disease is a chronic bacterial infection that, if untreated, can cause tooth loss or even worse. Studies show that pregnant women with gum disease may be at increased risk of pre-term and/or low birth-weight babies.* Gum disease is also linked to diabetes, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases.

What Causes Gum Disease?

Bacteria live in plaque, a sticky substance that forms on your teeth and attacks the gums and supporting bones. If you don't remove plaque, your gums may become inflamed. The irritated gum tissue can separate from the teeth, forming pockets. Bacteria invade these pockets, further irritating the gums and destroying teeth and supporting bone.

Fighting Back

You can prevent further gum disease by simply flossing daily, brushing twice a day with a soft-bristled tooth brush and fluoride toothpaste, eating a healthy diet and avoiding tobacco products. In more advanced cases, your dentist can give your gums a deep cleaning, prescribe a powerful antimicrobial mouth rinse and/or fluoride tooth paste, or even recommend gum surgery. For more information, visit www.deltadentalwa.com.

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