



Gingival diseases

Gingivitis is a common form of gum disease that causes irritation, redness and swelling of your gingiva, the part of your gum around the base of your teeth. It's important to take gingivitis seriously and treat it promptly. Gingivitis can lead to much more serious gum disease called periodontitis and tooth loss.

Symptoms

- Swollen or puffy gums
- Dusky red or dark red gums
- Gums that bleed easily when you brush or floss
- Bad breath
- Receding gums
- Tender gums



Causes

The most common cause of gingivitis is poor oral hygiene that encourages plaque to form on teeth, causing inflammation of the surrounding gum tissues.

- **Plaque forms on your teeth:** Plaque is an invisible, sticky film composed mainly of bacteria that forms on your teeth when starches and sugars in food interact with bacteria normally found in your mouth.
- **Plaque turns into tartar:** Plaque that stays on your teeth can harden under your gumline into tartar (calculus), which collects bacteria. Tartar makes plaque more difficult to remove, creates a protective shield for bacteria and causes irritation along the gumline. You need professional dental cleaning to remove tartar.
- **Gingiva become inflamed (gingivitis):** The longer that plaque and tartar remain on your teeth, the more they irritate the gingiva, the part of your gum around the base of your teeth, causing inflammation. In time, your gums become swollen and bleed easily.



Risk factors

Gingivitis is common, and anyone can develop it. Factors that can increase your risk of gingivitis include:

- Poor oral care habits
- Smoking or chewing tobacco
- Dry mouth
- Poor nutrition, including vitamin C deficiency
- Dental restorations that don't fit properly or crooked teeth that are difficult to clean
- Conditions that decrease immunity such as leukemia, HIV/AIDS or cancer treatment
- Hormonal changes, such as those related to pregnancy, menstrual cycle or use of birth control pills
- Genetics
- Medical conditions such as certain viral and fungal infections

Prevention

- Good oral hygiene.
- Regular dental visits.
- Good health practices.

