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## Gums - swollen

Swollen gums are abnormally enlarged, bulging, or protruding gums.

### Considerations

Gum swelling is common. It may involve one or many of the triangle-shaped areas of gum between teeth. These sections are called papillae.

Occasionally, the gums swell enough to block the teeth completely.

### Causes

Swollen gums may be caused by:

- Inflamed gums (gingivitis)
- Infection by a virus or fungus
- Malnutrition
- Poorly fitting dentures or other dental appliances
- Pregnancy
- Sensitivity to toothpaste or mouthwash
- Scurvy
- Side effect of a medicine
- Food debris

### Home Care

Eat a well-balanced diet that includes fruits and vegetables. Avoid sugary foods and drinks.

Avoid foods such as popcorn and chips that can lodge under the gums and cause swelling.

Avoid things that can irritate your gums such as mouthwashes, alcohol, and tobacco. Change your toothpaste brand and stop using mouthwashes if sensitivity to these dental products is causing your swollen gums.

Brush and floss your teeth regularly. See a periodontist or dentist at least every 6 months.

If your swollen gums are caused by a reaction to a medicine, talk to your health care provider about changing the type of medicine you use. Never stop taking a medicine without first talking to your provider.

## When to Contact a Medical Professional

Contact your provider if changes to your gums last longer than 2 weeks.

## What to Expect at Your Office Visit

Your dentist will examine your mouth, teeth, and gums. You will be asked questions about your medical history and symptoms, such as:

- Do your gums bleed?
- How long has the problem been going on, and has it changed over time?
- How often do you brush your teeth and what kind of toothbrush do you use?
- Do you use any other oral care products?
- When was the last time you had a professional cleaning?
- Have there been any changes to your diet? Do you take vitamins?
- What medicines do you take?
- Have you changed your oral home care recently, such as type of toothpaste or mouthwash you use?
- Do you have any other symptoms such as breath odor, sore throat, or pain?

You may have blood tests such as a CBC (complete blood count) or blood differential.

Your dentist or dental hygienist will show you how to care for your teeth and gums.

## Alternative Names

Swollen gums; Gingival swelling; Bulbous gums; Inflamed gums; Enlarged gums

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