



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → Gums - swollen

URL of this page: [//medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003066.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003066.htm)

## 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

## References

Ball JW, Dains JE, Flynn JA, Solomon BS, Stewart RW. Ears, nose, and throat. In: Ball JW, Dains JE, Flynn JA, Solomon BS, Stewart RW, eds. *Seidel's Guide to Physical Examination*. 10th ed. St Louis, MO: Elsevier; 2023:chap 13.

Chow AW. Infections of the oral cavity, neck, and head. In: Bennett JE, Dolin R, Blaser MJ, eds. *Mandell, Douglas and Bennett's Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases*. 9th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2020:chap 64.

Pedigo RA. Oral medicine. In: Walls RM, ed. *Rosen's Emergency Medicine: Concepts and Clinical Practice*. 10th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2023:chap 56.

## Review Date 3/31/2024

Updated by: Michael Kapner, DDS, General Dentistry, Norwalk Medical Center, Norwalk CT. Review provided by VeriMed Healthcare Network. Also reviewed by David C. Dugdale, MD, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.

## Learn how to cite this page



Health Content  
Provider  
06/01/2028

A.D.A.M., Inc. is accredited by URAC, for Health Content Provider ([www.urac.org](http://www.urac.org)). URAC's accreditation program is an independent audit to verify that A.D.A.M. follows rigorous standards of quality and accountability. A.D.A.M. is among the first to achieve this important distinction for online health information and services. Learn more about A.D.A.M.'s editorial policy, editorial process, and privacy policy.

The information provided herein should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions. Links to other sites are provided for information only – they do not constitute endorsements of those other sites. No warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, is made as to the accuracy, reliability, timeliness, or correctness of any translations made by a third-party service of the information provided herein into any other language. © 1997-2025 A.D.A.M., a business unit of Ebix, Inc. Any duplication or distribution of the information contained herein is strictly prohibited.



National Library of Medicine 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
National Institutes of Health