



What is Gum Disease?

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Periodontal (Gum) Disease

More than 45% of adults in the UK are affected by gum disease and, even at its most mild level, it can affect quality of life.

What is gum disease?

Gum disease is the most common noncommunicable disease in mankind and the main cause of tooth loss. It is the infection of the structures that surround the teeth- the gums, bone, the cementum that covers the roots and the ligaments.

People are often unaware they have it because it is not painful and doesn't affect their daily life, but if left untreated the impact can be serious, damaging the bone and tissue that support the teeth.

Types of gum disease

There are different forms of gum disease, but the most common are gingivitis and periodontitis.

Gingivitis is inflammation of the superficial soft tissue supporting the tooth, leading to swelling, redness and bleeding. Gingivitis is a prerequisite for periodontitis.

Whilst not all cases of gingivitis will progress to periodontitis, managing the former is a vital primary preventive strategy for the latter.

Gingivitis is reversible and may be treated with the help of hygiene sessions and improved oral hygiene.

Periodontitis involves the deeper supporting structures including bone destruction. Sadly, this bone destruction is generally, irreversible

What causes gum disease?

Dental bacterial plaque is the major determinant of gingivitis and periodontitis. This is an invisible to white, sticky film that forms on your teeth.

Accumulation of plaque is the commonest cause; a number of factors can contribute and aggravate the condition.

These include:

- Smoking
- Inherited/genetic susceptibility
- Medication that reduces saliva
- Diabetes
- Lifestyle-Stress, lack of sleep, mental health, alcohol
- Nutritional deficiencies- calcium, Vitamin C and B

The symptoms of gum disease

- People are often unaware that they have gum disease as its not painful (unless the condition flares-up causing a periodontal abscess)
- Red swollen gums
- Bleeding gums during brushing, eating or spontaneously
- Bad breath and bad taste
- Loose teeth and early loss of teeth
- Gaps between your teeth (migrating teeth)
- Black triangles where the interdental gingival tip is lost
- Receding gums
- A change in the way the teeth fit/bite

Gum disease and tooth loss can lead to nutritional compromise and a negative impact on self-esteem and quality of life.

Our specialist periodontists help patients to achieve and maintain the best possible periodontal health. The treatment philosophy embraces the best available

periodontal and implant care and hygiene with proven effectiveness.

Preventing gum disease

- Visit your dentist and your hygienist – it's recommended that you attend regular appointments depending on your susceptibility.
- Brush your teeth well, twice a day (morning and night) using toothpaste that contains fluoride.
- Perfect a good brushing technique – brushing should last at least 2 minutes.
- Using an electric toothbrush can provide you with good dexterity to reach all those important areas.
- Cleaning between your teeth is essential (using interdental brushes of the correct size or floss)
- Rinsing and gargling with a good mouthwash (medicated if necessary).
- A healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Consider counselling on how to stop smoking.

- Discuss approaches for weight loss and controlling sugar intake.
- Studies have suggested long-term gum disease can increase your risk of heart disease, stroke and premature child birth, so preventing periodontitis could be beneficial for your general health.

Treating gum disease

The treatment administered depends on to what extent you are suffering with gum disease. Your dentist or specialist practitioner will discuss the necessary course of action for you before beginning with any treatment.

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