Here are some tips to help prevent gum disease:

- Brush teeth and gums. Floss between teeth

    - Pay special attention to your back teeth. They are likely to have more plaque on them because they are hard to reach

- Change your toothbrush every 3 months

    - Bristles that are worn remove less plaque

- If your gums bleed, don't stop brushing and flossing

    - Use a toothpaste with specific anti-microbial action that can protect from gum disease. See your dental team if the bleeding continues

- Visit your dental team regularly for teeth cleanings and checkups

    - Tell your dental team if you are pregnant or have diabetes. These conditions make it harder for the body to fight gum disease

- Check your gums in the mirror often

    - Look for changes in colour or texture. If you think you have gum disease, see your dental team

Quick facts about gum disease

- Gum disease is an infection that can affect gums and the surrounding bone

- Gum disease starts when germs in plaque cause gums to become red and puffy and sometimes bleed

- You can help prevent gum disease by brushing and flossing twice a day

- Many people don't know they have gum disease. That's why it's important to see your dental team regularly

For more tips on how to prevent gum disease, talk to your dental team.

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oral health matters

What is gum disease?

Gums are made of soft tissue. They surround the bottom portion of the tooth crown. Taking care of your gums is just as important as taking care of your teeth.

Gum disease is an infection of the gums. It is caused by plaque, a sticky film that collects on teeth and gums. Plaque makes acids and toxins that can make gums red, puffy or bleed.

Over time, gum disease can cause gums to pull away from the teeth. This can progress in more serious infection that can destroy the surrounding bone and form pockets between the bone and the tooth surface. This will make teeth loose and if not treated teeth can subsequently fall out.

Gum disease is common but not normal. Many people have an early form of gum disease, which can be treated with good oral hygiene measures. But if you ignore gum disease, it can lead to tooth loss.

Pockets

Can form between teeth and surrounding bone with time as a result of untreated gingivitis and periodontal disease

Gum disease

Infection of the gums caused by plaque. Gums can look red and puffy
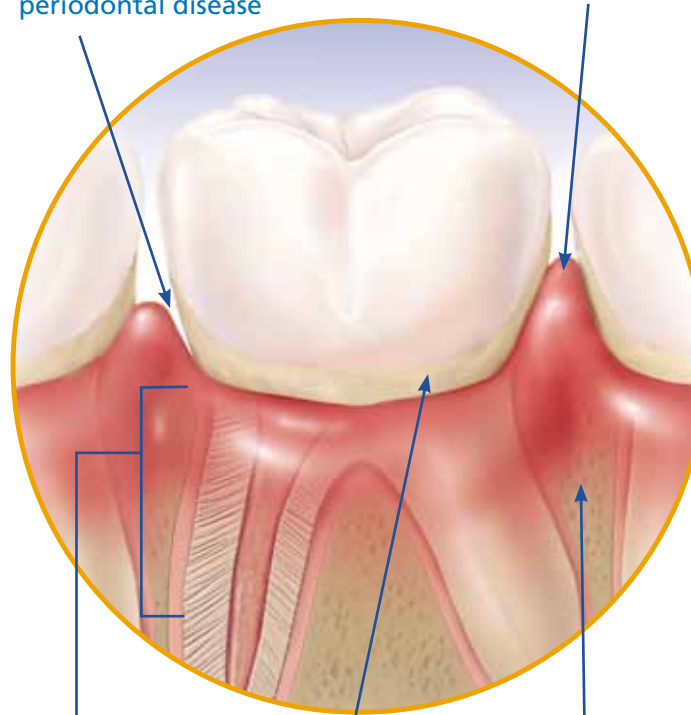
Tooth root

The part of the tooth below the gum line and covered by jaw bone

Plaque

A sticky film that can cause gum disease

Bone

Specifically the bone beneath your teeth and gums and surrounding your tooth root

Many people don't know they have gum disease. This is why it is important to see your dental team regularly for cleanings and checkups.

Here are some signs of gum disease:

- Gums that are red or puffy or bleed when you brush or floss
  - These are early forms of gum disease, called **gingivitis**. They can usually be treated with good oral care
- Tooth pain or sensitivity
  - Gums that have pulled away from the teeth can make teeth sensitive to hot or cold foods or drinks
- Persistent bad breath
- Adult teeth that are loose or develop gaps; changes in the way your teeth fit when you bite down
  - This is the most serious form of gum disease, called **periodontitis**

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