



Gum Disease

What You Don't Know Can Hurt You

The biggest threat to strong teeth and a healthy smile for you as an adult is gum disease. Because gum disease is typically slow to progress and often painless, it can easily reach an advanced stage before you are aware of its presence. Protect yourself by learning more about gum disease and taking action to ensure a healthier smile and better overall health.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Gum disease, also called periodontal disease, is an infection of the gum tissue and jawbone surrounding and supporting your teeth.
- In the early stages of gum disease, the gums typically become red, swollen and bleed easily. It is not normal for gums to bleed.
- If left untreated, gum disease can eventually destroy gums and bone. In advanced stages, enough bone can be destroyed to cause teeth to loosen and fall out.
- Bacteria, including those that cause gum disease, are believed to contribute to other serious health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and low birthweight or pre-term babies.
- The good news? If caught in the early stages, gum disease can be reversed.

DELTA DENTAL OF IDAHO

Learn helpful tips from Delta Dental of Idaho about preventing gum disease on the back of this card

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If you answer **YES** to any of the following questions, you may be at increased risk for gum disease. Talk to your dentist about reducing your risk and taking preventive steps.

Factors that may lead to increased risk for gum disease:

- I have diabetes
- I smoke or use tobacco
- I currently have a health condition, such as heart disease or a blood disorder
- I frequently eat or drink sugary substances
- I don't visit a dentist on a regular basis
- I am pregnant or am thinking of becoming pregnant
- I have frequent cavities or have family members with gum disease
- I take prescription or over-the-counter medications (*that make my mouth feel dry*)

Steps you can take to prevent gum disease:

Brushing and flossing and getting professional care on a regular basis can help prevent gum disease. Here are some helpful tips for ensuring a healthier smile.

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day for two minutes at a time.
- Floss at least once daily to remove bacteria and food from between the teeth and underneath the gums.
- Consider investing in an electric toothbrush.
- Limit sugary snacks and sipping on sodas, sports drinks, and juices with high amounts of sugar and acid (*even some diet sodas are acidic*).
- Visit your dentist on a regular basis for preventive assessment and professional cleanings.
- Share any changes in your overall health with your dentist.

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For more information about Oral Health and Wellness, visit our website at: www.deltadentalid.com