

Gum Disease

What is gum disease and how does it occur?

Gum disease is inflammation of the gums, also known as 'gingivitis'. Soon after you brush your teeth, a thin, sticky layer of bacteria starts to form on the surfaces of all your teeth. This layer of bacteria is called plaque. If the plaque is not removed, after 24 hours it starts to harden and then turns into tartar (calculus).



Calculus cannot be removed by brushing or flossing. Your dentist or hygienist will need to remove the calculus for you. The plaque and calculus irritates the gums and causes them to become inflamed.

What are the signs of gum disease?

- Bleeding after brushing or flossing
- 'Itchy' or painful gums
- Bad breath/bad taste in the mouth
- Swelling of the gums
- Redness of the gums

Why does it matter if I have gum disease?

If left untreated, gum disease can progress to something called periodontal disease. It spreads to the bone which connects the teeth in the jaw, which causes teeth to become wobbly and eventually fall out.

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How can I prevent gum disease?

By removing the plaque that builds up on your teeth.

This is done by:

- Brushing your teeth for two minutes twice a day
- Flossing or using interdental brushes between your teeth once a day

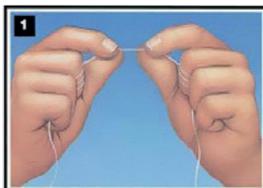
Here at Woodford Dental Care we routinely screen every patient for gum disease during their check-up. Your dentist and/or hygienist can show you the most effective ways to remove plaque from your teeth.

Is gum disease reversible?

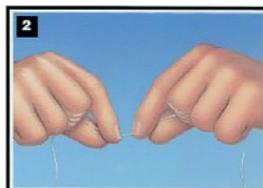
Early gum disease which is still in the gingivitis stage is reversible. Regular brushing and flossing will help to reduce the symptoms of gum disease.

We often have patients tell us that they stop flossing their teeth because their gums bleed. The reason for this is that the disease is active – and the best way to get on top of this is in fact to continue flossing. Over time the bleeding will lessen and will stop when your gums are healthy again. If you can't get on with floss, don't give up! Our dentists and hygienists will be happy to advise you which products and methods are suitable for you.

Periodontal disease (when bone is lost) is not reversible, but can be halted to prevent more bone from being lost.



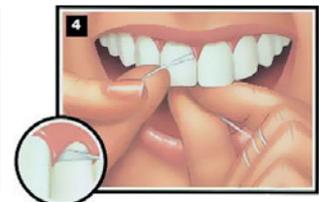
1 Wrap the floss around your middle fingers.



2 Pinch the floss between your thumbs and index fingers, leaving 1-2 inches in between.



3 Gently floss in between your teeth using a sawing-like motion. Use your index fingers to direct the floss between the lower teeth.



4 Bend the floss towards the front and back teeth in order to clean both tooth surfaces. Use your thumbs to direct the floss between the upper teeth.