![Northwood Dental logo]

Dealing with Gum Disease and Proper Gum Care

How Northwood Dental can help you stop gum disease

The cause of gum disease is primarily the presence of bacteria. Therefore, when you come in for your New Patient visit, we will do a thorough examination of your teeth and gums, taking measurements of any pockets (space between your teeth and gums). If gum disease is present, we check the severity of the gum disease and recommend treatment accordingly.
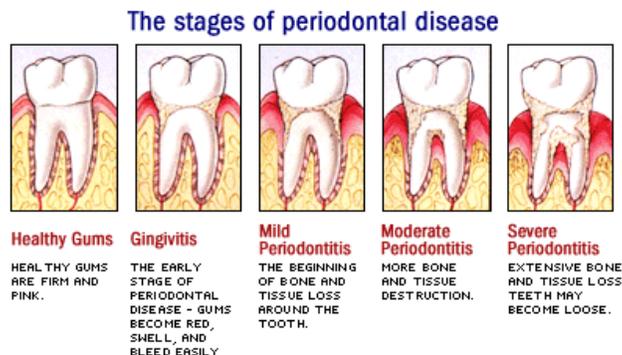
Symptoms of gum disease

Factors that contribute to gum disease include poor oral hygiene, irregular professional dental cleanings, smoking or chewing tobacco, certain medications, defective fillings, crooked teeth and systemic diseases.

Warning signs of gum disease are:

- Gums that bleed during tooth brushing
- Gums that have pulled away from the teeth
- Persistent bad breath or bad taste
- Permanent teeth that are loose or separating
- Any change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite

A healthy lifestyle, regular brushing and flossing, and regular visits to the dentist for cleanings are the best way to keep your gums healthy and to avoid gum disease.

What is gum disease and what causes it?

The stages of periodontal disease

Healthy Gums — HEALTHY GUMS ARE FIRM AND PINK.

Gingivitis — THE EARLY STAGE OF PERIODONTAL DISEASE - GUMS BECOME RED, SWELL, AND BLEED EASILY

Mild Periodontitis — THE BEGINNING OF BONE AND TISSUE LOSS AROUND THE TOOTH.

Moderate Periodontitis — MORE BONE AND TISSUE DESTRUCTION.

Severe Periodontitis — EXTENSIVE BONE AND TISSUE LOSS. TEETH MAY BECOME LOOSE.

Gum disease is caused by bacteria in your mouth. In a healthy state, the gums around your teeth are tight, pink, do not bleed when they are gently probed, and there is little space between the gums and the teeth for bacteria to build up.

If the bacteria are not removed effectively, the first stage of gum disease is that your gums can start to bleed and may become red and swollen (gingivitis). This may not be readily visible, especially in between and around the back teeth, but the space between the gums and teeth becomes bigger. The bacteria now have somewhere to hide.

As the space (pocket) deepens, the bacteria change in nature and become more aggressive. Your body starts to fight this infection. The combination of the bacteria and your body's response to them, leads to a loss of the bone that supports the teeth. This is periodontal disease or periodontitis (periodontitis — a word that comes from the combination of the smaller words: *"per"* meaning around, *"dont"* meaning tooth and *"itis"* meaning inflammation or infection).

Therefore, the most important thing to do is correctly diagnose the presence and severity of gum disease. We test your gums for signs of gum disease and severity and then an appropriate plan can be made to prevent the spread and progression of the disease.

Call 727-797-5161 to schedule a gum check-up or <u>click here</u> to request an appointment online.

Gum disease is the #1 cause of adult tooth loss in the US!