

Gum disease

To book an appointment at Avondale house Dental Surgery as either an existing or new patient please give our reception team a call on **01889 582 080** or visit our website to book your appointment online.

Introduction

Gum disease is a very common condition where the gums become swollen, bleed, sore or infected.

Most adults in the UK have gum disease to some degree and most people experience it at least once. It's much less common in children.

If you have gum disease, your gums may bleed when you brush your teeth and you may have bad breath. This early stage of gum disease is known as gingivitis.

If gingivitis isn't treated, a condition called periodontitis can develop. This affects more tissues that support teeth and hold them in place.

If periodontitis isn't treated, the bone in your jaw may be damaged and small spaces can open up between the gum and teeth. Your teeth can become loose and may eventually fall out.

What causes gum disease?

Gum disease is caused by a build-up of plaque on the teeth. Plaque is a sticky substance that contains bacteria.

Some bacteria in plaque are harmless, but some are harmful for the health of your gums. If you don't remove plaque from your teeth by brushing them, it builds up and irritates your gums. This can lead to redness with bleeding, swelling and soreness.

Seeing us at Avondale house Dental Surgery

You should make an appointment to us if your gums are painful, swollen or if they bleed when you brush your teeth.

Our dentist can carry out a thorough dental examination to check the health of your gums, which may involve inserting a thin metal stick with a bend in one end (periodontal probe) beside your teeth.

In some cases, a number of X-rays may be needed to check the condition of your teeth and jaw bone.

Preventing and treating gum disease

Mild cases of gum disease can usually be treated by maintaining a good level of oral hygiene. This includes brushing your teeth at least twice a day and flossing regularly. You should also make sure you attend regular dental check-ups.

In most cases, your dentist will be able to give your teeth a thorough clean and remove any hardened plaque (tartar). They'll also be able to show you how to clean your teeth effectively to help prevent plaque building up in the future.

If you have severe gum disease, you'll may need to have further medical and dental treatment and, in some cases, surgery may need to be carried out. This will usually be performed by a specialist in gum problems (periodontics)

Dental check-ups

It's important to have regular dental check-ups so any problems with your teeth and gums can be detected and treated early.

If you've never had gum disease and have good oral health, you may only need to visit your dentist every one to two years for a check-up.

You may need to visit your dentist more frequently if you've had problems with gum disease in the past. At each appointment one of our dentist will advise when you need your next appointment.

If you have an increased risk of developing gum problems – for example, if you smoke or have diabetes – you may be advised to visit your dentist more often so your teeth and gums can be closely monitored.

Complications of gum disease

If you have untreated gum disease that develops into periodontitis, it can lead to further complications, such as:

- gum abscesses (painful collections of pus)
- receding gums
- loose teeth
- loss of teeth

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