

What is *gum disease*?

Gum disease is caused by **plaque**.

Plaque is a soft, sticky film of bacteria and food debris that forms on our teeth and gums after we eat.

There are two forms of gum disease, **gingivitis and periodontitis**.

Gingivitis

Gingivitis means 'swelling of the gums'.

Gingivitis is caused by any little bits of plaque left behind after cleaning our teeth.

These bits of plaque irritate our gums, causing them to swell and bleed.

This is what gingivitis looks like.



Figure 1 Gingivitis

Gingivitis is reversible.

Untreated gingivitis can progress to periodontitis.

*Gingivitis is treated by seeing your dentist,
hygienist or oral health therapist for a **routine clean**.*



affinity periodontics
& implant dentistry

97 Union Road Ascot Vale Vic 3032
Tel: 03 9372 8007

Dr Melinda Newnham
BDSc(WA) FRACDS DCD(Perio)FRACDS(Perio) FADI FITI FPFA FICD
Provider No. 214479JT
A.B.N. 65 797 693 302

www.affinityperio.com.au

What is *gum disease*?

Periodontitis



Figure 2 Periodontitis

Periodontitis is the destructive form of gum disease.

When plaque causes bone and gum tissue to be destroyed around your teeth, you have 'periodontitis'.

Periodontitis rarely causes pain.

Many people are unaware that they have periodontitis until some of their teeth become loose.

Two things are needed to develop periodontitis:

1. You must be susceptible to it. Many people with periodontitis have a family member or relative who are also affected.
2. You have plaque on your teeth and develop gingivitis which weakens the gums.

Plaque bacteria then attack the seal between the gums and teeth, breaking down gum tissue and bone over time.

This process is usually slow but can be accelerated by smoking, vaping and uncontrolled diabetes.



affinity periodontics
& implant dentistry

97 Union Road Ascot Vale Vic 3032
Tel: 03 9372 8007

Dr Melinda Newnham
BDSc(WA) FRACDS DCD(Perio)FRACDS(Perio) FADI FITI FPFA FICD
Provider No. 214479JT
A.B.N. 65 797 693 302

www.affinityperio.com.au

If you have periodontitis, you may notice:

- red, bleeding gums
- bad breath
- receding gums
- gaps forming
- gum abscesses and loose teeth.



Figure 3 gum abscess

The last stage of periodontitis is **loss of teeth**.

Treating *gum disease*

Your dentist, hygienist or oral health therapist can treat gingivitis and periodontitis. Your dental team will also show you how to become an expert tooth and gum cleaner at home.



Figure 4. periodontal treatment for a patient with diabetes



Figure 5. periodontal treatment for severe periodontitis followed by Invisalign™.

If you have severe gum disease, you may be referred to a periodontist for treatment.



affinity periodontics
& implant dentistry

97 Union Road Ascot Vale Vic 3032
Tel: 03 9372 8007

Dr Melinda Newnham
BDS(c)(WA) FRACDS DCD(Perio)FRACDS(Perio) FADI FITI FPFA FICD
Provider No. 214479JT
A.B.N. 65 797 693 302

www.affinityperio.com.au