

If you don't know too much about gingivitis, don't feel bad.

A recent poll showed that 60% of adults know little about gum disease, its symptoms, causes, treatments and consequences.

Gingivitis, the top dental problem for people over 18, is the mildest form of gum disease. This early stage of gum disease develops when bacteria build up between the gums (gingiva) and the base of the teeth they surround.

Gingivitis is usually caused by the improper cleaning of teeth.

If you've only got gingivitis, consider yourself lucky. Gingivitis acts as an early warning signal that you could be heading for serious dental health problems. In fact, Gingivitis is the baby brother of Periodontitis. (inflammation around the tooth) This more severe form of gum disease is usually connected with loss of teeth.

What Symptoms does Gingivitis present?

Here's the good news. Most symptoms are mild:

- Gums are moderately inflamed
- Gums are sensitive to touch
- Gums bleed easily while brushing, flossing, or probing
- Gums might itch
- Bad breath might be present

Now, the bad news. Most symptoms are mild.

Because Gingivitis symptoms are easy to ignore people often do just that. Many gingivitis patients don't even know they have Gingivitis because they have no obvious symptoms. As a result, their disease can progress silently to the more serious dental disease, Periodontitis, without warning.

How Do You Get Gingivitis?

Teeth and gums need to be kept clean.

While heredity and other medical factors can influence the development of Gingivitis, the major cause is poor oral hygiene. Food trapped under the gums combines with bacteria to create plaque, a "toxic stew" that irritates the gums and makes them bleed. This colorless film of sticky material containing food particles, bacteria, and saliva attaches itself to the tooth above and below the gum line encouraging Gingivitis and tooth decay.

Then plaque, the "toxic stew," hardens into tartar (calculus) in just 24 hours. Each day this "contaminated crust" grows. That's why you need to remove plaque every day no matter what. Only a dental professional can remove tartar.

Why Should You Worry About Gingivitis?

Untreated, Gingivitis leads to periodontitis. Gingivitis can mean minor blood loss; Periodontitis can mean major tooth loss.

Evidence is mounting of potential links between Gingivitis and more serious health concerns. Healthy immune systems normally fight off the bacteria developing in the mouth. When this protection is compromised in any way, the added bacteria in the bloodstream appear to increase the risk of stroke or heart disease.

Remember, it's not what Gingivitis is but what it leads to – irreversible Periodontitis and likely tooth loss.

How Do You Find Out if You Have Gingivitis?

Visit your dentist twice a year. During the exam, your gums will be assessed for Gingivitis - bleeding, swelling, and firmness. In addition, your dental professional will check plaque and tartar build-up above and below the gum line.

What Gingivitis Treatments Are Available?

Early Gingivitis is reversible with professional treatment and regular oral care at home. The dentist or hygienist will probably help reduce the current buildup of tartar by scaling the teeth. Scaling removes tartar and plaque from the surface of the infected teeth.

Reversing Gingivitis is all about daily plaque control – essentially sound oral hygiene. That means, in most cases, stopping the plaque in your mouth is really in your own hands. Brush every day.

Dental professionals recommend oral irrigation as a great way to really clean teeth and gums.

Brushing and flossing will not get under the gums where the bacteria have set up housekeeping.

Oral irrigators get what tooth brushes and floss don't, so plaque and tartar never come back.

Oral irrigators flood the mouth with a jet of water under pressure to flush offending food particles and bacteria from the mouth.

Oral irrigators can now be found that attach to your showerhead or your bathroom sink faucet and are very easy to use.

## **IRRIGATION SYSTEMS**

**Waterpik - 800-525-2020 <http://www.waterpik.com/dentalcare/>**

**Conair - 800-633-6363 <http://www.conair.com/>**

**Oral Breeze – 800-524-6548 <http://www.OralBreeze.com>**

**Braun Oral-B - 800-272-8611 [www.oralb.com](http://www.oralb.com)**

**Hydro Floss -800-635-3594<http://www.hydrofloss.com/>**

**Panasonic - 800-338-0552 <http://www.panasonic.com>**

**Oxyfresh – 800-333-7374 <http://www.oxyfreshww.com>**

**Oratec – 800-368-3529 <https://www.oratec.net/>**