

# SMOKING AND GUM DISEASE



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GlaxoSmithKline  
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## How does smoking affect my mouth?

Smoking can affect your mouth in a number of ways. Some are obvious to people around you and others may be hidden but can have a long-term impact on your health. If you smoke you may experience the following things:

- Tooth staining
- Bad breath
- Dental plaque and calculus
- Gum recession
- Gum disease (gingivitis) which can lead to periodontitis & tooth loss



## What is gum disease?

Gum disease describes swelling, soreness or infection of the gum tissue. There are two main forms of gum disease:

### Gingivitis

Gingivitis is the mildest form of gum disease. Your gums become red and swollen and may also bleed easily when you brush your teeth. There is usually little or no pain. With improved oral hygiene this condition is reversible.

### Periodontitis

Untreated gingivitis may lead to periodontitis. As plaque spreads and grows below the gum line, the tissues and bone that support your teeth are broken down by plaque bacteria and destroyed. Your gums may become separated from your teeth to form pockets, which can become infected. Eventually teeth may become loose and have to be removed. The damage caused by this condition cannot be reversed. However with improved oral hygiene and treatment by your dentist or hygienist the condition may be stabilised.

## Why am I at risk of gum disease as a smoker?

The main cause of gum disease is dental plaque. Plaque is the sticky layer that collects on the surface of your teeth and gums and contains bacteria. This plaque can become hardened and form into a surface layer of tartar (calculus). The bacteria in the tartar continue to attack the tissues that support the root of your tooth.

If you smoke you are more likely to develop calculus. In addition you are more likely to have deep pockets between your teeth and gums where bacteria can develop.

## Am I more at risk of developing periodontal disease as a smoker?

Research shows that adult smokers are approximately three times as likely as non-smokers to have periodontitis. In addition the rate of disease progression is increased if you smoke.

Smoking has a strong suppressive effect on gingival bleeding. This can mask the early signs of gum disease, which means that it may be left untreated.

Smoking causes a lack of oxygen in the bloodstream, so the infected gums do not heal. This may impact on the success of any treatment for gum disease.

## How can I prevent gum disease?

The best way to avoid or alleviate gum disease is to practice good oral hygiene. In addition research has shown that people who stop smoking suffer from reduced frequency of gum disease versus continuous smokers.

Brush your teeth thoroughly twice a day for at least two minutes. Use a total care toothpaste, designed to help keep gums healthy and containing fluoride to protect against decay.

Use floss or interdental brushes at least once a day to clean in-between your teeth and remove plaque, in particular from around the gum margin.

After brushing, rinse your mouth with a fluoride mouthrinse, to reach the areas that may be missed by brushing.

## How can I treat gum problems if they occur?

Your dentist or hygienist will help treat your gum problems by making sure that your teeth are thoroughly clean.

Your dentist may recommend treatment using a chlorhexidine digluconate based mouthwash, such as **CORSODYL** Mint Mouthwash.

**CORSODYL** mouthwash contains an antibacterial ingredient that attacks and helps kill the plaque bacteria that are causing your gum irritation. In addition, **CORSODYL** forms a coating on your teeth, which lasts for up to 12 hours to help prevent new plaque forming on your teeth and causing further irritation. Ask your dentist or hygienist for further information on treating your gum problems.

Always read the label  
Contains chlorhexidine  
digluconate



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Five questions to ask your dentist or hygienist about smoking and gum disease

1. How can I remove the stains from my teeth?
2. How can I tell if I have gum disease?
3. Are gum problems reversible?
4. If I stop smoking will it impact on my oral health?
5. Do you know how I can stop smoking?

Ask your dentist or hygienist about your smoking and gum disease



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**NIQUITIN** Patches, Lozenges and Gum are stop smoking aids. Contain nicotine.  
Requires willpower. Always read the label.