

# Gingivitis

## Symptoms of gingivitis

Gingivitis, also known as gum disease, is inflammation of the gums. It is often the first stage of periodontal disease.

Some of the warning symptoms of gingivitis include—

- ❖ bleeding when brushing or flossing.
- ❖ redness where the gums and tooth meet.
- ❖ swollen gums.
- ❖ bad breath.

## Causes of gum disease

Gingivitis usually begins when plaque, the sticky, colorless film of bacteria and food particles that constantly forms on your teeth, is not cleaned away every day.

It is hard to see plaque, but in the image below, a harmless dye stains it red. When plaque stays on your teeth for two or three days, it can harden into tartar.

Tartar, which is stained blue in the image, can irritate your gums and lead to gingivitis.

Gum disease can also be caused by certain medical conditions, some medications, trauma, smoking or chewing tobacco. During pregnancy, hormonal changes can contribute to gum disease.



*Plaque stains red;*



*Gums swollen from gingivitis*

## Examination

To determine if you have gingivitis, we examine your mouth and look for red, swollen, or bleeding gums.

Because gingivitis can advance to periodontal disease, we may take x-rays to check your bone levels.

We may also check the depth of the sulcus around each tooth. A sulcus is the tiny groove between the base of the visible part of your tooth and the gum.

## Treatment

If you have gingivitis, we thoroughly clean your teeth and may schedule you for more frequent cleanings. We may also suggest a special mouthwash or rinse and discuss your homecare technique.

The good news is that gingivitis is reversible. The sooner we catch it, the better chance you have of keeping your smile for a lifetime.