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## Gum Disease Part 1

Do you notice when you brush or floss your teeth that your gums bleed quite a bit? Maybe your teeth have suddenly become very sensitive when you're eating or drinking something very hot or cold? Or have you started complaining that your teeth and gums just seem really cranky, causing you some pain and discomfort?

These could all be signs that you may have gum disease. The good news is that there are often non-surgical ways to treat gum disease that can get you on the path to a healthier mouth in no time.

### What is Gum Disease?

Gum disease, also called gingivitis or periodontal disease, is caused by the bacteria in your mouth. That's right -- whether you want to think about it or not, your mouth actually holds quite a bit of bacteria. So when you don't brush your teeth to kill that bacteria, it ends up building up on your teeth as plaque. As this plaque builds up on your teeth, it begins to have a negative impact on your gums. So the longer it sits there, the worse it gets, eventually getting to the point where your gums are now diseased and just normal brushing and flossing may not heal them all the way.

Additionally, some people are just more susceptible to having gum disease. Some risk factors include:

- Smoking
- Genetics
- Age
- Medications
- Decreased Immunity From Another Disease
- Nutrition & Diet
- Stress
- Clenching

One of the real problems is that Gum disease is often **silent**, meaning symptoms may not appear until an advanced stage of the disease. We earlier discussed some of the signs of gum disease, including bleeding, painful and/or swollen gums and tooth sensitivity. Some other signs can be:

- Bad breath
- Receding gums
- Changes in your teeth (separating or loose)
- Changes in your bite pattern
- Gums that are receding or pulling away from the teeth, causing the teeth to look longer than before
- Loose or separating teeth
- Persistent bad breath
- A change in the fit of partial dentures

### **Treating Gum Disease**

There are both surgical and non-surgical treatments. I will be discussing these in next month's article.