



## HEALTHY GUMS FOR HEALTHY SMILES

Gum disease is a chronic bacterial infection that affects gums and bone supporting the teeth. Major risk factors for gum disease are poor dental hygiene and smoking. Diabetes, unhealthy diet and stress can also increase your chance of developing gum disease.

# What You Need to Know about Gum Disease:

- In early gum disease, called gingivitis, your gums may be red or swollen and bleeding.
- At this stage, the condition is still usually reversible when treated with daily brushing and flossing, as well as regular dental cleanings.
- In later-stage disease, called periodontitis, your gums may be seriously damaged and begin to pull away from the teeth.
- The first line of defense against gum disease is good oral care.

## When Your Gums Recede

Schedule a dental exam to determine the cause. Periodontal disease is a common and serious cause of gum recession. If gum recession leaves the roots of your teeth exposed, your teeth may become more sensitive to hot, cold, sweet or sour foods and drinks.

- Brush your teeth gently, at least twice a day, with special attention to the gum line, and use fluoride toothpaste.
- Replace your toothbrush every three or four months or sooner if the bristles begin to fray.
- Floss at least once a day. Your teeth aren't truly clean until they're brushed and flossed.
- Visit the dentist routinely for a check-up and professional preventive care.

**Healthy Smile, Happy Life:** Help prevent disease and stay on the path toward a healthier, happier life with LifeSmile from Delta Dental. Take advantage of numerous free resources for improving your oral health at [deltadentalmn.org/oral-health](http://deltadentalmn.org/oral-health).

