

## Oral Disease

### What are dental (oral) diseases?

Those chronic diseases that occur in the mouth; three such diseases are caries, gingivitis, and periodontitis.

### What causes oral disease?

Like other chronic illnesses genetics, lifestyle, health habits combine with other factors such as bacteria and acids to cause oral disease.

### What is bacterial plaque?

Plaque is a sticky film full of bacteria, which builds up on teeth.



### What is dental caries?

More commonly known as dental decay or cavities, a hole is formed from acid production when the plaque is not removed from teeth. If the hole is not filled it will enlarge. If not treated, it may kill the tooth. This may cause an abscess, and may lead to a root canal, or the loss of the tooth.

### What is gingivitis?

Poor brushing and flossing habits allow plaque to build up on teeth. The gums become red and swollen and may bleed. Often there are no warning signs of gum disease except these. Gingivitis is the first stage of gum (periodontal) disease.



### What is periodontitis?

It is a chronic infection of the tissues that hold the teeth in place. Plaque builds and hardens under the gums. If the infection gets worse, gums may pull away from the teeth, making teeth look long, and pockets of infection form. This type of infection can lead to tooth loss and lead to loss of the bone that holds the tooth in the socket. The loss of bone will make it impossible to wear dentures, because when the base on which dentures sit is destroyed, dentures will not have any support. Pain abscess and loosening of the teeth do not occur until the disease is advanced.

#### Source:

- American Dental Hygienists' Association, [www.adha.org](http://www.adha.org)

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