

More than 75 percent of Americans over 35 have some form of gum disease. In its earliest stage, your gums might swell and bleed easily. At its worst, you might lose your teeth.

**The bottom line? If you want to keep your teeth, you must take care of your gums.**

### *What is Gum Disease?*

Gum disease is an inflammation of the gums that can progress to affect the bone that surrounds and supports your teeth. It is caused by the bacteria in plaque, a sticky, colorless film that constantly forms on your teeth. If not removed through daily brushing and flossing, plaque can build up and the bacteria infect not only your gums and teeth, but eventually the gum tissue and bone that support the teeth. This can cause them to become loose, fall out or have to be removed

by a dentist.



### **Signs of Gum Disease**

- Gums that are red, puffy,
- swollen, or tender
- Gums that bleed during brushing or flossing
- Teeth that look longer because your gums have receded
- Gums that have separated or pulled away from your teeth, creating a pocket
- Changes in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- Pus coming from between your teeth and gums
- Constant bad breath (dragon breath) or a bad taste in your mouth



### *How is Gum Disease Treated?*

- The early stages of gum disease can often be reversed with proper brushing and flossing.
- Good oral health will help keep plaque from building up.

**• See Your Dentist On Your Time Off !**

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## **Dental Care and Defense For Crowley Crews**



**CROWLEY**

**Daily preventive care, including proper brushing and flossing, will help stop problems before they develop and is much less painful, expensive, and worrisome than treating conditions on board that have been allowed to progress.**

**Gum Disease**

## There are three stages of gum disease:



### **Gingivitis:** this is the earliest

stage of gum disease, an inflammation of the gums caused by plaque buildup at the gum line. If daily brushing and flossing do not remove the plaque, it produces toxins (poisons) that can irritate the gum tissue, causing gingivitis. You may notice some bleeding during brushing and flossing. At this early stage in gum disease, damage can be reversed, since the bone and connective tissue that hold the teeth in place are not yet affected.

**Periodontitis:** at this stage, the supporting bone and fibers that hold your teeth in place are irreversibly damaged. Your gums may begin to form a pocket below the gum line, which traps food and plaque. Proper dental treatment and improved home care can usually help prevent further damage.

**Advanced Periodontitis:** in this final stage of gum disease, the fibers and bone supporting your teeth are destroyed, which can cause your teeth to shift or loosen. This can affect your bite and, if aggressive treatment can't save them, teeth may need to be removed.



Healthy Gums are firm and do not bleed. They fit snugly around the teeth.

### *How do I know if I have*

### *Gum Disease?*



Gingivitis - gums are mildly inflamed, may appear red or swollen and may bleed during brushing.






Periodontitis - gums begin to separate and recede from the teeth. This allows plaque to move toward the roots, supporting fibers and bone.



Advanced Periodontitis - supporting fibers and bone are destroyed. Teeth become loose and may need to be removed.

### *What Should I do to help prevent Gum Disease?*

- Brush with a soft-bristled tooth brush and clean between teeth with dental floss. 
- Brush your teeth TWICE a day (at least). 
- Get regular professional dental cleanings on your time off the vessel. This is the only way to remove plaque that has hardened into tartar. 
- Do not smoke cigarettes or use other forms of tobacco. 
- Eat a well balanced diet and limit your snacks.
- Follow your dental professional's dental advice and treatments.