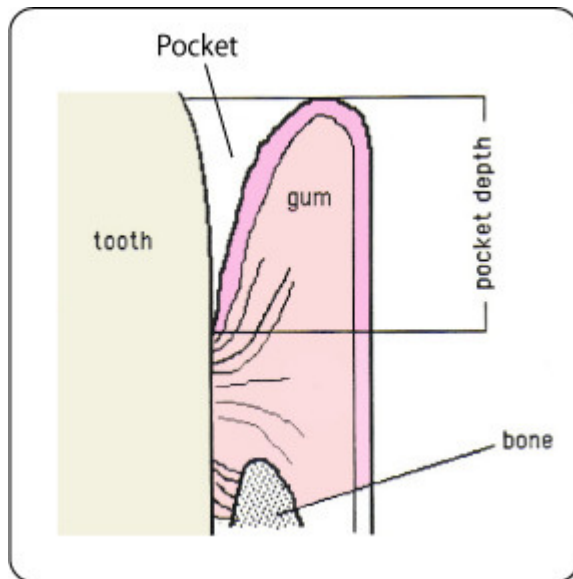


## Gum Disease

**Gum disease** is a problem for over 60% of the adult population. Because it often goes unnoticed until the later stages, it has often been called a "silent epidemic" in American culture.



Some of the signs and symptoms of gum disease are red, swollen gum tissue, bleeding of the gums when you brush or floss, chronic bad breath, and loose teeth.

### Cause of gum disease

The cause of gum disease is a bacterial infection in the gum tissue surrounding the tooth. This infection is worsened by the presence of plaque and tartar on your teeth.

When this tartar is not removed professionally by a dentist or dental hygienist, an infected **pocket** can

form around the tooth.

When this pocket deepens, the infection can spread to the fibers supporting the tooth and to the surrounding bone. Left untreated, this gum disease can lead to the formation of an dental **abscess** and the loss of one or more natural teeth.

### Gum disease linked to heart disease.

Recent studies have linked gum disease to increased risk of heart attack, osteoporosis, diabetes and stroke.

### Treatment

Treatment for gum disease can be **surgical** or **non-surgical** in nature.

**Surgical** gum treatment involves removing the diseased gum tissue through either a minor procedure, called a **gingivectomy**, or through a more extensive procedure, called periodontal (gum) surgery.

This is usually necessary when the pockets around the teeth are 6 millimeters deep or deeper, or where the infection is especially bad.



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**Non-surgical** gum treatment is fairly new and can be used when the infection of the gums is limited, and the amount of bone loss is not too deep (pockets less than 6 millimeters deep). When this is the case, we can use **root planing** to heal most of the disease.

### **Prevention**

So how does one **prevent** this silent epidemic? The answer is in the coordinated partnership between the dental office and the patient. We clean your teeth on a regular basis, and you work hard at home to keep the levels of plaque and tartar to a minimum.

In addition, proper diet and nutrition are essential if gums are to remain healthy and strong. For this, I recommend plenty of protein in the diet (to supply the amino acids necessary for wound healing) and supplementation with normal vitamins and minerals as recommended by your physician or nutritionist.

Also, the restriction of refined sugar in one's diet (colas, candy, etc) is essential for healthy teeth and gums.