
*For Your
Information...*

TOBACCO USE AND
PERIODONTAL DISEASE



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A tobacco-free life can improve your oral health along with your overall health. Using tobacco has been linked to the development and progression of periodontal disease.

How is tobacco use related to periodontal disease?

- Using tobacco increases calculus, the hard substance on teeth that can only be removed during professional cleanings.
- Calculus contains bacteria that release toxins, which cause infection of the gums, inflammation and gum destruction.
- Pockets are created in the gums that cause them, along with bone tissue to shrink and pull away from teeth.
- Without treatment, teeth may loosen and fall out.

Why are periodontal diseases harder to detect and treat in tobacco users?

- Nicotine and other chemicals in tobacco mask the symptoms of periodontal diseases.
- Smokers' bodies have weaker defense mechanisms because smoking reduces oxygen and nutrient delivery to the gums and bone tissues.
- Smokers will have a slower healing process, causing periodontal treatment results to be harder to predict.

What other conditions are caused by tobacco use?

Many conditions can be brought on by tobacco use of any kind, which includes the use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes (including hookah pipes) and chewing tobacco. Tobacco use can cause:

- Bad breath
- Oral and lip cancer
- Stained teeth
- Loss of taste and smell
- Mouth sores and spots
- Black, hairy tongue

Tips to stop smoking and improve your periodontal health

By quitting smoking you can gradually erase its harmful effects on your periodontal health. A smoking cessation program is the first step toward quitting. Other tips people find helpful to stop smoking include:

- Find a stop-smoking program, or other support group.
- Choose a stress-free time to quit.
- Ask family, friends and colleagues for support and encouragement.
- Exercise every day if possible, to relieve stress and get healthier.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and get plenty of rest.
- Keep on hand crunchy foods like carrots, apples and sugarless gum as good oral substitutes.
- Spend more time in places where smoking is prohibited.