

Preventistry® is Delta Dental of Massachusetts' groundbreaking and unique approach to transforming the oral health care system. Preventistry combines clinical innovation, actionable data and digital engagement to provide a higher level of care and improve the health of our members.



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**Manage**

**gum disease**

Improving oral health today,  
For better overall health tomorrow.  
That's the power of Preventistry®.



## What is gum disease?

Gum disease is often referred to as periodontal disease (an infection of your gums and jawbone) and gingivitis (a milder form infecting just your gums). Both can become worse if not properly treated and can also be passed on to other family members. Many people don't even know they have gum disease, because it can appear without symptoms.



## What causes gum disease?

Gum disease is caused by bacteria that collect in the pockets around your teeth. These bacteria can damage your gum tissue and jawbone, making your gums pull away from your teeth, which traps bacteria and can lead to infection.

## What can happen to people with gum disease?

Without treatment, the attachment of the tooth to the bone as well as the bone itself can become damaged. Eventually, some of your teeth can become loose and may fall out.

It's important to protect against gum disease, because:

- Studies suggest that there may be an association between gum disease and the outcomes of other diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.
- In addition, pregnant women with gum disease may be more likely to have premature babies.

## How is gum disease treated?

Your dentist will give you a deep cleaning to remove the bacteria that is damaging your gums. Your dentist may also give you a prescription mouth rinse like chlorhexidine, prescription fluoride toothpaste, or other medicine to use at home. Some people may need gum surgery. Your treatment will depend on the seriousness of your gum disease and how you respond to treatments.

## What can I do to stay healthy?

- Floss your teeth daily.
- Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Visit your dentist every six months for oral exams and cleanings.
- Do not chew or smoke tobacco.

## Talk with your medical doctor

Due to the possible association between gum disease and other systemic health issues, we encourage you to let your medical doctor know if you have been diagnosed with gum disease.