FOLLOW THE PREVENTISTRY℠ APPROACH

Delta Dental's unique Preventistry approach promotes prevention-focused care for members. We urge you to embrace our Preventistry practices, too, by:

- Utilizing the oral health tools and resources available to you at *www.deltadentalma.com*.
- Using your dental plan—Delta Dental provides coverage for more preventive services than any other plan.
- Taking the Preventistry Pledge at *www.preventistry.com*.
- Taking an active role in managing your oral health.

Healthy Mouths *for life*

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.

REMEMBER TO ASK YOUR DENTIST ABOUT WAYS TO TREAT YOUR GUM DISEASE

- How frequently do I need to have my teeth professionally cleaned?
- Should I use a prescription mouth rinse like chlorhexidine or fluoride toothpaste?
- Are there other ways I can help keep my gums healthy?

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DELTA DENTAL OF MASSACHUSETTS

465 Medford Street, Boston, MA 02129

www.deltadentalma.com

MANAGE GUM DISEASE

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Gum disease can appear without any warning symptoms, and can be devastating to your oral health.

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GUM DISEASE CAN BE TREATED, AND PREVENTED.

OUR PREVENTISTRY℠ APPROACH AT DELTA DENTAL GIVES YOU THE COVERAGE, BENEFITS AND INFORMATION YOU NEED TO IMPROVE YOUR ORAL HEALTH AND KEEP YOUR SMILE HEALTHY, FOR LIFE.

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 IT?

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.* This is why 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?

First, your dentist will probably 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've responded to previous treatments.

WHAT CAN I DO TO STAY HEALTHY?

Gum disease can usually be treated successfully. If you have gum disease, here are some suggestions to help keep your gums healthy:

- Floss your teeth daily.

- Brush twice a day with a soft-bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.

- Visit your dentist at least every six months for oral exams and cleanings.

- Use any at-home products your dentist recommends, such as chlorhexidine mouth rinse, or prescription fluoride toothpaste.

- Do not chew or smoke tobacco.

Tear out this card along the perforation and keep it in your wallet as a reminder to discuss your oral health with your medical doctor and dentist.

REMEMBER TO DISCUSS YOUR GUM DISEASE WITH YOUR MEDICAL DOCTOR

Studies suggest that there may be an association between gum disease and the outcomes of other medical conditions, including:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Increased likelihood of premature, low birth weight deliveries among pregnant women

It is important to let your medical professional know if you have gum disease as you may be at higher risk for complications from these and other medical conditions.

Healthy Mouths *for life*