

I have... GINGIVITIS?

WHAT IS GINGIVITIS?

- Gingivitis is the medical word for 'gum disease'
- It is the inflammation of the gums
- It is a disease that can lead to more serious dental problems
- It is usually treatable and preventable

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF GINGIVITIS

- Bleeding gums, especially when you brush and floss
- Bright red or purple-red gums
- Swollen or puffy gums
- Shiny gums
- Gums are sore when they are touched
- Always having bad breath
- Loose permanent teeth
- Receding gums

HOW DID I GET GINGIVITIS?

Gingivitis starts with plaque that, when not cleaned off the teeth, leads to inflammation of the gums.

WHAT IS PLAQUE?

Plaque is a clear, sticky layer of bacteria (germs), food debris and saliva that develops on your teeth and near the gums every day. Plaque is the main cause of gum disease.

WHAT IS TARTAR?

Tartar is hardened plaque that forms beside the gum line. Tartar cannot be brushed or flossed off your teeth. It can only be professionally removed.

If plaque is **not** brushed and flossed off your teeth every day then it will begin to harden into tartar within **one to two days**.

WILL GINGIVITIS GO AWAY?

Gingivitis can be controlled and sometime even stopped or reversed if you take good, regular care of your teeth

WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Floss at least once a day to remove plaque and bacteria between your teeth
2. Brush your teeth and tongue at least twice a day.
3. Check your gums regularly for sign/symptoms of gingivitis
4. Visit your oral health professional regularly, every six to nine months
5. Eat healthy foods — follow [Canada's Food Guide](#)

WHAT IF I DON'T BRUSH AND FLOSS REGULARLY?

Plaque will continue to form and harden into tartar on your teeth.

Tartar can also trap more plaque and can form under the gums.

Tartar and plaque under the gums that is not cleaned off your teeth by a dental professional will lead to the breakdown of your teeth, gums and jaw bone.

WHAT IS PERIODONTAL DISEASE?

Gingivitis, left untreated, can lead to periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is a serious chronic, contagious, bacterial infection that affects the gums and bone supporting your teeth.

Periodontal disease is **not** reversible and can lead to tooth loss.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-800-361-5653

TTY: 1-866-512-6228

york.ca/dental

22-5330

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white bird or wing shape above the text "York Region" in a white serif font, all set against a dark blue background.



FLOSSING INSTRUCTIONS

Flossing is important. It removes plaque/food debris from between teeth where a toothbrush cannot reach.

1. Take a piece of floss equal to the distance from your hand to your elbow
2. Wrap the ends of the floss around your middle fingers of each hand so that you end up with about 10 to 15 cm in between
3. Use your index fingers and thumbs to hold and control the floss
4. Slide the floss between your teeth, always staying against the side of your tooth, and move the floss gently under the gums.
5. Make a 'c-shape' around the tooth and wipe the tooth two or three times by moving the floss up and down — this will gently remove the plaque
6. Make sure you floss both sides of every tooth — even the backs of the last molars
7. Move to a clean section of floss as it gathers debris
8. Throw your floss in the garbage (do not flush it down the toilet)
9. Brush your teeth after flossing

FLOSSING TIPS:

- Floss before you brush
- Flossing takes practice — keep trying!
- Your gums may bleed when you first begin to floss; if bleeding continues after a few days, see your oral health care provider.
- Floss in the same pattern every day so no tooth is forgotten
- Floss to prevent gingivitis, cavities and bad breath. If it is difficult to floss, speak to your oral health care provider for other suggestions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Flossing removes more than 1/3 of the plaque from tooth surfaces your toothbrush can't reach.

To speak with the York Region Public Health Dental Program, call **1-800-735-6625** or visit york.ca/dental for more information.

