



## Tobacco and Gum Disease

Tobacco use is a strong risk factor for gum disease. It is not just having the smoke in your mouth that affects the gums. Nicotine actually makes it easier for the bacteria that are normally in your mouth to lead to inflammation.

Tobacco makes it easier for gum disease to occur, makes it more severe and more difficult to eradicate. **Thus, we need to treat you more aggressively than a non-smoker.** This more aggressive therapy may not be covered by your insurance. Rest assured we will only recommend additional therapy when the expected benefit to your oral *and overall* health more than outweighs your out-of-pocket expense.

Gum disease can occur without you even knowing it. Ongoing gum disease is strongly linked with an increased risk for heart disease and other serious diseases. We will follow you closely and continually check for the formation of any areas of gum disease. We will also recommend treatment at the earliest signs of disease since watching and waiting can be dangerous in your case – things can get worse in a hurry.

- Smoking and tobacco use increase the risk for gum disease.
- Gum disease increases the risk for heart disease.
- Since tobacco users are already at an increased risk for heart disease it is vitally important for tobacco users to do whatever is necessary to eliminate any gum disease and then keep it at bay.

We will recommend seeing you more frequently than twice a year. We know through solid research that it takes about 2-3 months for bacteria to reorganize and cause disease. Since it is easier for bacteria to lead to problems in your case we need to see you more frequently to make sure that we eliminate any small flare-ups before they turn into bigger problems.

Growing research is suggesting that second hand smoke can increase the risk for gum disease. It is important for other members of your household to be screened for the presence of gum disease.

Interested in quitting? There are newer medications that can make it substantially easier. Used in a carefully coordinated approach these medications are proving to greatly increase the chance of successfully quitting. Ask us and we will gladly refer you to a physician who can get you on the path towards becoming smoke free.