

# Five Things You Didn't Know About Gum Disease

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## Avoid stress

Gum disease, aka periodontal disease, is one of the biggest threats to our oral health. Gum disease is a set of conditions that affect the supporting structures around your teeth. It causes swelling of the gums and if it gets worse, it can damage the bone and ligaments that hold your teeth in place - a very scary thought!

There are several stages of gum disease, from easily treatable gum inflammation, to far more serious cases which can lead to tooth loss. We are all familiar with the basics and we all know that a good dental hygiene routine will help to prevent us from developing gum disease. However, since this disease is still very common, perhaps we are not as clued up as we think.

Thankfully, Dr Petros Moschouris, Specialist Periodontist at multi-award-winning dental and orthodontic London practice elleven ( [www.ellevendental.com](http://www.ellevendental.com) ), shares five facts on gum disease that you may not have heard before - so take note!

## Stress contributes to gum disease

Stress does not just spoil your mood, it can also spoil your smile. Heightened stress levels can affect gum disease, making the infection harder to fight. It is often been found that patients going through a difficult time suffer more severely from gum disease, and those who are most stressed are at a higher risk of developing gum disease. This is thought to be related to the fact that stress depresses the immune system therefore makes you more prone to gum disease.

There are further factors that can increase your risk of developing gum disease, for example, smoking, a poor diet, diabetes and even hormonal changes in women can all affect the health of your gums.

## Grapefruit can help aid gum disease

Did you know that eating two grapefruits a day can help tackle gum disease? A study by the *British Dental Journal*\* concluded that a daily consumption of grapefruit can reduce gum bleeding for those who suffer from gum disease. Participants in the study also showed an increase in their Vitamin C levels. The antioxidant effect of Vitamin C aids the repair of gums so if you are not a fan of grapefruit, any fruit rich in Vitamin C will probably do the job too.

## Gum disease is hereditary

Unfortunately, genetics are a detrimental factor for some patients' susceptibility to gum disease. According to research, as many as 30% of people may be at risk genetically from gum disease\*\* and can be six times more likely to contract it, regardless of how good their oral health routine is. This is due to their body responding faster to the presence of dental plaque and bacteria. But here is the good news - just because you are genetically more likely to suffer from gum problems, it does not mean that you will *definitely* be affected by it, or suffer from it as severely as other family members may have, but it does mean that you must take extra care to keep those gums in tip top condition. Make sure that you brush your teeth at least twice daily, floss regularly and use a fluoride mouthwash.

## Gum disease is more common than tooth decay

Gum disease is extremely common, one of the most common diseases in the world, with more than half of people over the age of 30 having had some form of periodontal disease at least once. It can happen at any age, although it is very rare for gum disease to occur to a significant degree in children. Gum disease is more common than tooth decay and is the number one cause of tooth loss amongst adults, even more reason to keep your oral hygiene routine up to scratch. \*\*\*

## Chewing gum can help prevent gum disease

Chewing sugar-free gum after meals not only helps protect your teeth but your gums too. Gum chewing helps the mouth to produce saliva, which flushes out food residue. It also brings high levels of natural antibodies to the mouth tissue to help fight off plaque. It is best to chew gum after meals and snacks, but don't let chewing gum replace brushing and flossing and always make sure it's sugar-free!