



Bleeding Gums

After you brush, is there pink in the sink?

If so, you may have gingivitis, which is an inflammation of the gums and the most common form of gum disease. It is estimated that 80 percent of adults have some form of gum disease, so pink in the sink is no reason to panic. The bad news is that gingivitis may not be painful or noticeable except for bleeding when brushing. The good news is that gingivitis is completely reversible with proper, thorough and regular cleaning by brushing and flossing.

The mouth is a perfect place for bacteria to live—wet, warm and a constant food supply keep bacteria proliferating. It's these bacteria that are responsible for gingivitis and other more serious gum diseases. If not brushed off or rinsed out, or if our immune system is weak, bacteria stick and multiply on the tooth surfaces and begin to attack the gums and teeth. The bacteria may very well take over “tongue town” if we don't brush and floss.

You may be more at risk to develop gum disease if you smoke, are diabetic, pregnant, have an immunity disease like cancer or HIV/AIDS, hormone fluctuations (pregnancy, puberty), poor nutrition, have a viral or bacterial infection, or build up tartar on your teeth. However, most gingivitis is due to not brushing often enough, long enough or effective enough to break up the mats of bacteria from around the teeth.

Ignore the pink sink warning and the gingivitis may progress to more serious gum conditions

that could adversely affect your entire body health. Some forms of gum disease are considered life threatening. Studies are showing that chronic gum inflammation can lead to some serious medical issues, so don't assume a little bit of pink everyday is harmless.

If the pink persists after you've worked harder at your brushing efforts, go see your dental professional for assistance. Sometimes bacteria will take up residence deeper in the gums than you can brush, and it will require some professional help to send those bacteria packing. Some people find that electric or battery operated toothbrushes do a better job of cleaning their teeth than a manual one. If you find flossing is difficult, try one of the handle-type flossers or even a toothpick to clean in between teeth. Rinsing forcefully with water after eating can also help dislodge some of the bacterial plaque that causes gingivitis.

Let's keep those gums pink, not the sink!

<http://www.perio.org/consumer/gingivitis.htm>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/gingivitis/DS00363>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001056.htm>

www.SuperiorDental.com