

## **Warning Signs which should signal a trip to the Dentist**

**Your gums bleed when you brush or floss** – bleeding is often the first signs of periodontal or gum disease. Periodontal diseases range from simple gum inflammation to more serious disease which results in damage to the supporting structures of your teeth which include the soft tissue and supporting bone. Periodontal disease can be diagnosed early as gingivitis. As plaque and tartar remain on teeth, they accumulate more bacteria. The body senses these bacteria and mounts an immune response against the bacteria which causes inflammation of the gums that is called "gingivitis." In gingivitis, the gums become red, swollen and can bleed easily. Gingivitis is a mild form of gum disease which can usually be reversed with daily brushing and flossing, and a regular cleaning by your dentist.

**Bad Breath that doesn't go away** - The cause might be gum disease, certain foods, drinking, smoking, medicine you are taking or a health condition. Dry mouth and post-nasal sinus drip can also be the culprit. If you cannot get rid of bad breath with daily brushing and flossing, see your dentist.

**Dry Mouth** - Is also a side effect of many common medicines and also of immune-compromising diseases. It does not feel good, makes it difficult to talk and eat foods and it can cause rampant decay especially along the gum lines of your teeth. You need to tell your dentist if you have this problem.

**A loose tooth** – A loose tooth could be caused by gum disease, a blow to the mouth or grinding or clenching. In any case, it is a serious problem. You should see your dentist.

**Bleeding that you can't explain, mouth sores that don't heal in 7 to 10 days, white or red patches in your mouth or feeling numb or sore inside your mouth** – These are all signs of possible oral cancer and a visit to the Dentist is indicated.

**Teeth that are sensitive to hot, cold and pressure** – This is usually indicative of a tooth with a pulp or nerve which is injured and a filling or root canal may be required depending on the cause. See your dentist right away to avoid letting the problem get worse and need more expensive treatment.

**A bump or pimple on the gum by a tooth** – this is a sign of infection. It could be that the pulp of a tooth has become necrotic or died, or there may be a periodontal or gum infection. It is an active infection which needs treatment and you should see your dentist to avoid systemic complications which could result in a trip to the hospital emergency room.

**Flat teeth** – Flat or ground down teeth are indicative of grinding. Grinding is a very destructive habit which can reduce your teeth to short nubs. It is very expensive to treat requiring crowns on all your teeth. A custom occlusal guard or a night guard made by your dentist can prevent grinding and protect your teeth if worn at night.

**Sensitivity to sweets** – This usually indicates the presence of cavities on your teeth. Early treatment with a filling can reduce the need for more expensive time consuming procedures such as root canals and crowns.

If you have any of the signs or symptoms listed above it is to your benefit to see a dentist right away to have the problem looked at and diagnosed. Timely treatment can reduce the need for more expensive and time consuming treatments and in the case of oral cancer it can save your life. Regular checkups and cleanings every 6 months with your dentist can help to keep your teeth healthy and trouble free.

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