

### **How healthy gums can help you live a healthy life!**

As explained in our initial practice leaflet on Periodontitis (gum disease) [www.chrchillwaydentist.co.uk/our-services/preventative/hygiene/](http://www.chrchillwaydentist.co.uk/our-services/preventative/hygiene/), this is a disease which affects 80% of adults, and if left untreated can lead to early tooth loss. It is not a disease affecting the 'older generation' as often perceived by many individuals. More aggressive forms of periodontitis (gum disease) may start as early as puberty for some unlucky individuals.

The primary cause of gum disease is bacterial plaque, which grows in any warm moist and solid environment; therefore the mouth is a perfect breeding ground! We will never be successful in removing all plaque from the mouth but by daily tooth brushing, interdental cleaning (tepes or floss) and chewing sugar free gum containing xylitol several times per day, we can keep the plaque levels to a bare minimum.

The bacteria within the plaque produce powerful poisons which destroy the ligaments supporting the teeth and also trigger your immune system to start destroying the surrounding bone, and if left untreated, this results in teeth becoming loose and eventually being lost completely.

Long standing inflammation in the body, caused by plaque accumulation, is now linked to an increased risk of developing disorders such as diabetes, heart disease, respiratory conditions and underweight or pre term babies. More recent studies even indicate that poor oral hygiene and the presence of gum disease may be associated with a shortened life expectancy.

Diabetic patients, unfortunately, are more at risk of gum disease and its progression. Sufferers often have more frequent episodes of pain and problems with their gums as well as loosing much more of those precious ligaments and surrounding bone in a short amount of time.

Diabetic patients who have poor oral hygiene will often find that this also impacts on their 'glucose levels' making their diabetes difficult to control. Long standing inflammation in the body causes erratic peaks of glucose throughout the day which is not ideal for any diabetic patient; a much more consistent level of glucose in the blood is needed for the body to perform to its optimum.

Therefore our aim should be to reduce inflammation within the body which can be done by:

1. Good effective tooth brushing
2. Good diet which includes plenty of vegetables and fruits, as these contains vital antioxidants which has been proven to reduce inflammation within the body
3. Regular exercise
4. Stopping smoking and any use of tobacco
5. Limiting alcohol to current government guidelines.

All of the above will help secure a healthy body, mouth, teeth and gums, which will increase the possibility of a **LONG** and healthy life!