



That fuzz you feel is plaque, a sticky coating that's filled with bacteria.

If left on your teeth too long, plaque creates acid that can wear down enamel and cause cavities. And if plaque builds up next to your gumline, it can lead to gum disease and a serious gum infection called [periodontitis](#).

The infection connection

It's a no-brainer that gum infection can cause problems in your mouth, such as swollen, bleeding gums and loose teeth. But when oral bacteria get into your bloodstream, they can trigger bad reactions all through your body.

Gum infections can complicate issues like [diabetes](#), [heart disease](#) and respiratory disease, plus lead to [pregnancy complications](#) . And if you have certain conditions like diabetes, you're at greater risk of developing periodontitis.

Healthy mouth, healthy body

The good news is that gum disease can be prevented with [proper oral care](#). So, make sure to brush twice a day and floss once, plus visit your dentist regularly for routine exams, cleanings and X-rays.

Remember, most dental plans cover preventive dental care 100% when you visit an in-network dentist. And some plans also include extra coverage to help people with certain chronic conditions get their gum disease treated.

To see if you have [Smile for Health® – Wellness](#), just log into your *MyDentalBenefits* account. If you see the **Wellness** tab, your plan includes this extra coverage.

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