Gingivitis

What is gingivitis?

Gingivitis, which is a swelling and inflammation of the gums, is the first stage of periodontal disease.

What causes gingivitis?

The main cause of gingivitis is the accumulation of plaque, the sticky film of food and bacteria that forms constantly on your teeth.

If plaque isn't removed each day, the bacteria in plaque invade the space between the teeth and gums and begin producing toxins. These toxins irritate and inflame the gums, causing them to swell and bleed.

Gingivitis is easily reversed, but if it's not caught in time, it can lead to periodontal disease, a more serious infection of the teeth, gums, and jawbone that can lead to tooth loss.

Common form of gum disease

Healthy gums

The periodontal probe

The warning signs

Some of the warning signs of gingivitis are redness where the gums and tooth meet, swollen gums, bleeding when brushing and flossing, and bad breath.

There is usually no pain associated with gingivitis. It's the mildest form of gum disease, and many people aren't aware they have the condition.

To determine whether you have gingivitis, we'll perform a thorough examination. We'll look for any changes in the shape, color and contour of the gums, and bleeding in the gums upon probing.

The treatment

If we determine that you do have gingivitis, treatment always includes a professional cleaning, which removes plaque buildup from the teeth.

Sometimes, additional steps are required. These could include using a disclosing solution regularly to determine where the plaque is, reviewing the most effective techniques for brushing and flossing, and using an antibacterial rinse to help kill destructive bacteria. We may also need to set up more frequent office visits to monitor the health of your gums.

It's important to catch and treat gingivitis early, before it progresses and results in the bone and tooth loss of periodontal disease.