

WOMEN & PERIODONTAL DISEASE

A woman's periodontal health may be impacted by a variety of factors.



PUBERTY

During puberty, an increased level of sex hormones, such as progesterone and possibly estrogen, causes increased blood circulation to the gums. This may cause an increase in the gum's sensitivity and lead to a greater reaction to any irritation, including food particles and plaque. During this time, the gums may become swollen, turn red and feel tender.

MENSTRUATION

Occasionally, some women experience menstruation gingivitis. Women with this condition may experience bleeding gums, bright red and swollen gums and sores on the inside of the cheek. Menstruation gingivitis typically occurs right before a woman's period and clears up once her period has started.

PREGNANCY

Some studies have suggested the possibility of an additional risk factor – periodontal disease. Pregnant women who have periodontal disease may be more likely to have a baby that is born too early and too small. However, more research is needed to confirm how periodontal disease may affect pregnancy outcomes.

All infections are cause for concern among pregnant women because they pose a risk to the health of the baby. The Academy recommends that women considering pregnancy have a periodontal evaluation.

MENOPAUSE AND POST-MENOPAUSE

Women who are menopausal or post-menopausal may experience changes in their mouths. They may notice discomfort in the mouth, including dry mouth, pain and burning sensations in the gum tissue and altered taste, especially salty, peppery or sour.

In addition, menopausal gingivostomatitis affects a small percentage of women. Gums that look dry or shiny, bleed easily and range from abnormally pale to deep red mark this condition. Most women find that estrogen supplements help to relieve these symptoms.