



Why Do My Gums Bleed?

Bleeding gums are common—but they should never be ignored.

Seeing blood when you brush or floss your teeth can be alarming. Many people assume they are brushing too hard, but bleeding gums are often a sign that your gums are inflamed. Healthy gums generally do not bleed during routine oral hygiene.

The good news is that, in many cases, early gum problems can be reversed with proper care and regular dental visits.

Common Causes of Bleeding Gums

1. Gingivitis

The most common cause of bleeding gums is **gingivitis**, an early stage of gum disease. It develops when dental plaque—a sticky film of bacteria—builds up along the gumline.

Symptoms may include:

- Bleeding during brushing or flossing
- Red or swollen gums
- Tenderness
- Persistent bad breath

Without treatment, gingivitis can progress to more serious periodontal disease.

2. Poor Oral Hygiene

Skipping brushing or flossing allows plaque to accumulate, irritating the gums and increasing inflammation.

3. Brushing Too Aggressively

Using excessive force or a hard-bristled toothbrush can injure the gums. Gentle brushing with a soft-bristled toothbrush is recommended.

4. Starting to Floss

If you have not flossed regularly, your gums may bleed during the first few days after you begin. This often improves as the gums become healthier with consistent flossing.

5. Certain Health Conditions or Medications

Some medical conditions and medications, including blood-thinning medications, may increase the likelihood of gum bleeding. If bleeding is persistent or severe, discuss it with your healthcare provider.

What Should You Do?

If your gums bleed occasionally:

- Brush twice a day using a soft-bristled toothbrush.
- Clean between your teeth daily with floss or interdental cleaners.
- Use fluoride toothpaste.
- Maintain regular dental checkups and professional cleanings.
- Avoid tobacco products, which increase the risk of gum disease.

Do not stop brushing because your gums bleed. Consistent oral hygiene helps remove plaque and allows inflamed gums to heal.

When Should You See a Dentist?

Schedule a dental evaluation if:

- Bleeding continues for more than one to two weeks.
- Your gums are swollen, painful, or receding.
- You notice loose teeth.
- You have persistent bad breath despite good oral hygiene.
- Bleeding is frequent or heavy.

Early evaluation can help prevent more advanced gum disease.

Can Bleeding Gums Be Prevented?

Yes. Many cases of bleeding gums can be prevented by:

- Brushing twice daily with fluoride toothpaste.
- Cleaning between your teeth every day.
- Eating a balanced diet with limited added sugars.
- Attending regular preventive dental visits.
- Avoiding tobacco use.

Healthy gums are an important part of overall health.

Key Takeaway

Bleeding gums are usually a sign that your gums need attention—not that you should stop brushing. Early action, consistent oral hygiene, and regular preventive dental care can often reverse gingivitis before it progresses.

Educational Disclaimer

This article is provided for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional dental or medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. If you have persistent bleeding gums, pain, swelling, or other concerning symptoms, consult a licensed dental or healthcare professional.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Adult Oral Health*.
- National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR). *Gum (Periodontal) Disease*.
- American Dental Association (ADA). *Gum Disease (Gingivitis and Periodontitis)*.