

# A healthy smile for life!



you can prevent

oral health problems

## What is gum disease?

- Periodontal disease is an infection of your gums and jawbone.
- Gingivitis is an infection in your gums.

## Gum disease

- Gets worse if not properly treated.
- Can be passed on to other family members.
- Can appear without symptoms so people may not know they have it.
- May affect the outcomes of other diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.
- May lead to premature birth in pregnant women.

## How is gum disease treated?

- A deep cleaning by your dentist to remove the bacteria that is damaging your gums.
- Prescription mouth rinse or fluoride toothpaste, or other medicine to use at home.
- Some people may need gum surgery.

## Stay healthy after treatment for gum disease

- Floss daily.
- Brush twice a day.
- Visit your dentist regularly for oral exams and cleanings.
- Use at-home products your dentist recommends.
- Do not chew or smoke tobacco.



## What causes cavities?

- Bacteria in your mouth.
- Frequent snacking and sipping sugary drinks.
- Not cleaning your teeth well.

## Reduce your risk for cavities

- Brush for two minutes, twice a day, with fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush your teeth after eating sugary or starchy foods.
- Floss daily to remove food trapped between teeth.
- Chew Xylitol gum.

## Protect your teeth with sealants

- A dental sealant is a thin, plastic coating painted on the chewing surfaces of teeth -- usually the back molars -- to prevent tooth decay
- Takes only a few minutes to apply a sealant to a tooth.
- Last for 5 years or longer.

## Who should get sealants?

- Children when their first molars (ages 6-7) and second molars (ages 12-13) emerge.