

## How Tobacco Use Affects Your Mouth

Do you have healthy gums? You may kiss them goodbye if you smoke, says the American Dental Association (ADA). Smoking may cause nearly 75 percent of periodontitis in adults.

Smoking and using any tobacco product damages your gums. It affects the bones and soft tissues in your mouth where they attach to your teeth. If you smoke, you are more likely to have receding gums. This condition exposes the roots of your teeth, making your teeth more sensitive to hot and cold, and increases your risk for tooth decay. Smoking also makes tartar build up more quickly on your teeth.

Smoking affects the blood vessels throughout your body, raising your risk for heart disease and stroke. In your mouth, it delays healing after you have a tooth extracted or have oral surgery.

Using tobacco products also increases your risk for oral cancer. These are signs and symptoms that may indicate oral cancer, according to the ADA:

- A sore or tenderness in the mouth that doesn't get better
- Pain, tenderness, or numbness in the mouth or on the lips
- A lump or leathery patch inside your mouth, or color changes in your oral tissues (gray, red, or white patches, rather than a healthy pink color)
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, or speaking
- Changes in the way your teeth fit together
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If you have any of these signs or symptoms, talk with your health care provider or dentist.

"Smoking and Tobacco." Mouth Healthy, American Dental Association.  
[www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/smoking-and-tobacco](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/smoking-and-tobacco) Accessed 2013.

"Smoking and Tobacco Use: Heart Disease and Stroke." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 28, 2007.  
[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/health\\_effects/heart\\_disease](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/health_effects/heart_disease) Accessed 2013.

"Kicking the Habit: Keeping Your Smile Healthy." *Journal of the American Dental Association*. May 2003, vol. 134, p. 663.  
[www.ada.org/sections/scienceAndResearch/pdfs/patient\\_26.pdf](http://www.ada.org/sections/scienceAndResearch/pdfs/patient_26.pdf) Accessed 2013.