



Women's Health and Dental Care

January

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Did you know that female hormones can lead to an increase in dental health issues?

- > The hormones estrogen and progesterone increase the blood flow to your gums, making women's teeth and gums more sensitive and irritated.
- > Women are at a higher risk for contracting gum disease.
- > Women may experience oral health problems when hormones fluctuate, including around their periods, while using birth control and during pregnancy or menopause.

Female hormones can also increase some oral health issues, such as:

- > Cold sores and canker sores
- > Dry mouth
- > Changes in taste

Early-stage gum disease is preventable and reversible, so brush, floss, and make annual visits to the dentist to keep your teeth healthy and strong.

Sources: Office of Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Trivia time:

Who was the first woman to receive a dental degree?

Answer: Lucy Hobbs Taylor in 1866 from Ohio College of Dental Surgery in Cincinnati, OH

Know the risks and signs of gum disease

Since women are more at risk for gum disease, it's wise to know the warning signs that can signal a problem and the factors that place you at risk.

Warning signs:

- > Gums bleed easily
- > Red, swollen, tender gums
- > Persistent bad breath or bad taste
- > Loose or separating teeth
- > Any change in the fit of your bite

Risk factors:

- > Poor oral hygiene
- > Smoking or chewing tobacco
- > Genetics
- > Pregnancy
- > Diabetes
- > Medications, including steroids and some oral contraceptives

Sources: American Dental Association