

## How to Reduce Inflammation at Home

Gum disease is a chronic inflammatory disease that affects the supporting bone and tissues around the teeth. The inflammatory reaction is your body's way of removing the toxins released by bacteria that live on your teeth and gums. However, when the inflammation lasts for too long or is too strong, it starts to break down the tissues around your teeth, including your gums and supporting bone. This may cause teeth to become loose and even fall out.

Unfortunately, inflammation doesn't only occur in your mouth. Several other serious conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis, are caused by the same chronic inflammation that causes periodontal disease.

The good news is that your dental professional can help you reduce the inflammation in your mouth as a result of periodontal disease through treatments such as scaling and root planing. But you can also help to reduce the inflammation in your mouth and even in your entire body right at home. Here are a few things you can try:

### Eat the right foods

Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as oily cold-water fish (salmon, tuna, herring, or

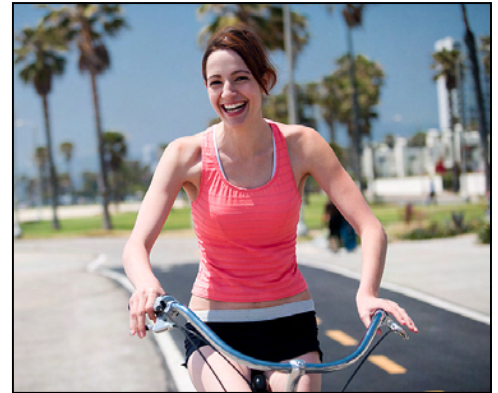
sardines) and walnuts, have been shown to reduce inflammation. Green tea, which also contains antioxidants, has been shown to reduce the risk of gum disease and cardiovascular disease by reducing inflammation in the body.

### Exercise

People who maintain a healthy body weight and exercise regularly have been shown to have lower incidences of periodontal disease than those who do not exercise regularly. Moderate exercise may also help reduce inflammation in your body, but extreme exercise (running a marathon, for example) can actually increase systemic inflammation. It's a good idea to discuss your exercise plan with a health professional to ensure that it's a good fit for your lifestyle.

### Brush and floss your teeth

When you brush your teeth twice a day and floss at least once a day, you remove the bacteria on your teeth and gums that causes the inflammatory response that leads to gum disease. Therefore, it's important to take care of your teeth every day by brushing and flossing, and don't forget to see your dental professional for regular cleanings and check ups, including a yearly comprehensive periodontal evaluation (CPE).



## What are omega-3 fatty acids?

Omega-3 fatty acids are unsaturated fats that our bodies cannot make by themselves. Therefore, omega-3s must come from the things we eat, which is why it's important to eat a balanced diet. Omega-3s are vital for metabolism and brain function and also help to reduce inflammation in the body. Research has shown that omega-3 fatty acids can help treat or prevent several conditions other than periodontal disease, including cardiovascular disease, asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, depression, and Alzheimer's disease. However, talk to your health or dental professional before taking omega-3 supplements to make sure they're right for you.

The American Academy of Periodontology Patient Page is a public service of the AAP and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of your personal periodontist. There may be variations in treatment that your periodontist will recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Visit [perio.org](http://perio.org) to assess your risk and for more information on periodontal disease.