



## COMMON ORAL HEALTH ISSUES IN AGING

Many of us struggle with issues like tooth decay, but time and wear can cause additional problems as we age. Common issues include:

### Gingivitis

Gingivitis occurs when bacteria in your mouth cause a build-up of plaque, which can cause the gums to become inflamed and to bleed when you brush or floss. When left untreated, gingivitis can lead to gum disease.

### Gum Disease

Gum disease is the leading cause of tooth loss in adults. As the gum and bone pull away from the teeth, plaque grows below the gum line, destroying the gum tissue and bone. This causes teeth to become loose. Untreated gum disease also increases your chance of developing heart disease or stroke.

### Oral Cancer

Signs of oral cancer include either a sore, lump, or red or white patch that does not heal within two weeks or seems to heal but then opens up again in the same place. Your dental professional can detect oral cancers before you can see or feel them.

### Dry Mouth

Dry mouth occurs when your mouth fails to produce enough saliva. Dry mouth is often a side effect of medications. Because saliva naturally protects the teeth and decreases your risk of cavities, dry mouth may cause additional oral health issues.