

How Smoking Affects your Mouth

It's no secret that smoking can give you bad breath. But how smoking affects your mouth is often surprising.



Stained Teeth

This is the most common and the most obvious effect. Resin from the cigarette smoke builds up on the teeth and in the mouth. This causes the teeth to turn yellow and, in extreme cases, even brown. Sure you can use tooth-whitening products to combat this process. But that's only a temporary solution for the damage that's being done every time you light up.



Inflammation of Salivary Glands

That's right, your salivary glands and their openings on the roof of your mouth become irritated and inflamed when you smoke. This not only gives you bad breath, but also causes dry mouth. That's because it can interfere with the distribution of enzymes and moisture that keep your mouth clean. If the salivary glands can't do their job your oral health will suffer.



Buildup of Plaque & Tartar on Teeth

Because of the above-mentioned salivary issues, plaque and tartar can build up on the teeth. This can cause gum disease. As plaque and tartar build up, they can interfere with the work of the gums by wedging in between the gum and the tooth. This can lead to gum disease and even tooth loss and eventually decay of the jawbone.



Gum Disease

Smoking can reduce blood flow to the gums. That slows down their ability to heal and to protect the roots of your teeth. Gum disease and gingivitis—the leading cause of tooth loss in adults—are more common in smokers than in non-smokers.



Oral Cancer and Sores in the Mouth

White patches appear in the mouths of smokers, which may foretell a predisposition to develop oral cancer. Smoking increases the risk for oral cancer as well as other types of cancer.



Difficulty Healing

Smokers who undergo dental procedures and oral surgeries (sometimes made necessary by their smoking) often have a harder time healing and recovering from those procedures. Because of the constant flow of toxins, decreased blood flow and crippled salivary glands, the mouth is simply unable to heal the way it's supposed to.



The good news is that the human body is designed to heal and recover. Quitting smoking is the first step to helping your mouth and teeth return to a strong and resilient state. Whether it's cigarettes, cigars or an old-fashioned corn cob pipe, it's never too late to make better decisions about your oral health.