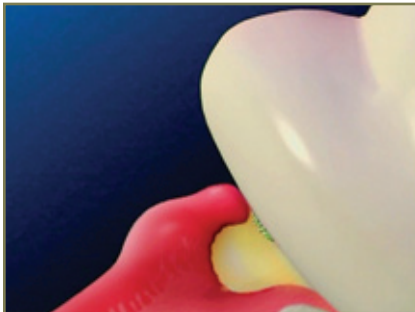


# Periodontal Abscess

A periodontal abscess is a pocket of pus that typically forms in the space between the gums and the tooth. This space is called the sulcus.

You may have an abscess if the affected tooth hurts when you tap or bite on it, when the tooth is slightly loose, or the gum is swollen, shiny, and red or deep red-blue. On the other hand, you may have an abscess and have none of these symptoms at all.



*Pus forming between gums and tooth*



*A gum boil*



*Root planing*

## What causes a periodontal abscess?

An abscess can start when the sulcus is injured or a small piece of food becomes wedged in the space. Injured gums can become infected by bacteria that are naturally present in your mouth. Impacted food, often a seed or popcorn shell, prevents the natural fluid in the gums from flushing the bacteria out and provides the fuel for the bacterial growth.

These conditions can cause an infection, especially if periodontal disease is already present in the mouth. If the infection continues, a periodontal abscess may develop. In some cases, the abscess will drain through the gum, creating what's commonly called a gum boil.

A periodontal abscess can cause pain and swelling, and if left untreated, can cause a lot of damage to supporting bone and ligaments in a short period of time.

## Treating a periodontal abscess

A periodontal abscess should be treated as soon as possible to eliminate pain, prevent the spread of infection, and restore the health of your mouth.

If we suspect a periodontal abscess, we'll perform a thorough examination. We'll use a periodontal probe around the teeth and take x-rays to check bone levels. If the situation is severe, we'll look for any pus or discharge.

To treat a periodontal abscess, we must drain the abscess and remove the source of infection. Most often, a periodontal abscess is drained when we perform a root planing procedure to clean plaque and tartar deposits from the root surface. In some cases, we may drain the abscess by first numbing the area and then lancing it at its base. Antibiotics, though they can't cure an abscess by themselves, may be prescribed.

Homecare may include rinsing the mouth with warm salt water or an antimicrobial mouthwash.