Gum tissue recession is pretty common among adults in the US. Gums in good shape should fit snugly around the base of each tooth, like the cuff of a sock around your ankle. Gum recession is present when the tissue pulls or wears away from the tooth base. The problem is that this exposes the tooth root, which is protected by your gums. An exposed tooth root can lead to extreme tooth sensitivity, and it is more vulnerable to decay and infection.

**Gum grafting** [2] is a safe, effective treatment for advanced gum recession, but you may be able to avoid getting to that point. Some people are genetically predisposed to gum recession. But even if that is the case, there are things you can do to prevent this dental problem. The best prevention depends on the cause of the recession in the first place:

- **Smoking/chewing tobacco**: Don't use tobacco! It is hazardous to your health. It also irritates the gum tissue, and may impede the healthy circulation of blood into your gums. Tobacco use also significantly increases the risk of gum disease, which is marked by gum recession.
- **Teeth grinding**: Teeth grinding exerts significant pressure on your teeth and gums, which can lead to the gums wearing down. Grinding also wears down and potentially cracks teeth. So how do you prevent it? First talk to our dentists. We might recommend a custom nighttime mouth guard that you wear over your teeth. This guard holds the teeth apart. Sometimes stress reduction methods can help, as many people clench and grind as a result of tension and anxiety.
- **Poor dental hygiene**: Plaque irritates your teeth and gums. It also leads to tooth decay. Plaque is a film of bacteria and food debris that forms on the surface of your teeth. If left to its own devices, plaque hardens into tartar, a substance that can only be removed by a
dental hygienist or dentist. Brushing twice a day, flossing once every day and visiting the
dentist every 6 months are the components of great dental hygiene [3] that prevent gum
recession.

- **Improper brushing technique:** Hard toothbrush bristles run the risk of wearing away gum
tissue. These hard bristles can also strip enamel over time. Pushing down on your teeth with
too much force does the same thing. So to prevent this cause of recession, choose a soft-
bristled toothbrush and use light pressure. Some people think that forceful pressure is
needed, but the softest touch is all you need in order to reduce plaque and food debris on
your teeth.

- **Gum disease:** If you've already developed gum disease [4], then you will need to have that
treated in order to address gum recession. Ask our dentists about which treatments are right
for you depending on the stage of disease.

Still curious what you can do? Please call our experienced Aurora and Denver-area dentists to
arrange an in-person consultation. We treat each patient as the unique individual they are, and we
will present all of your options for restoring total dental wellness. To arrange your appointment,
please call Aspenwood Dental Associates at **720-400-8546**.

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document.getElementsByTagName("script")[0]; tagjs.async = true; tagjs.src =
"//s.btstatic.com/tag.js#site=6EeDEhH"; s.parentNode.insertBefore(tagjs, s); }());

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