

Dental hygiene is an important part of your overall health, and you can learn a lot about what's going on in your body from your mouth. In fact, according to the Academy of General Dentistry, more than 90 percent of all systemic diseases produce oral signs and symptoms.

## What do These Symptoms Mean?

***-Sharp pains when biting down*** will usually point towards tooth decay, cavities, or cracked teeth. They could also mean nothing if the pain only happens every once in a while and doesn't occur in the same spot.



***-Loose or crooked teeth*** are usually the result of a periodontal disease which causes bone loss around the teeth and jaw. See a dentist immediately if you find any newly loose or crooked teeth.

***-Bleeding or swollen gums*** are mostly caused by hormonal changes and bacterial build up. They're usually nothing to worry about, but if they persist for more than a week you should see your dentist.



***-Sores in your mouth*** are caused by eating spicy or citrus foods. They're usually harmless but could also potentially be a sign of a Vitamin A deficiency. Before seeing your dentist, try eating more carrots.

***-Gum pain*** could mean many things. You could have a cavity, you could have oral cancer, your gums may have drawn back, or it could be nothing. See a dentist, it's better to be safe than sorry.

## Teeth Whitening

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Believe it or not, your teeth aren't actually *supposed* to be whiter than the first untouched snowfall of Siberia. Yellow teeth are completely natural and don't signify any major health issues. In fact, they're usually caused by drinking too many dark beverages (tea, coffee, soda pop, etc...).

If you still want to keep your teeth from turning yellow though, don't rely on brushing your teeth after each meal and *definitely* don't use any harmful 'whitening' products. Drinking/eating causes enamel to weaken so brushing your teeth right after you've had a meal is bad for them. Instead make sure to drink a small glass of water after every meal and it'll be safe to brush again about an hour later.

