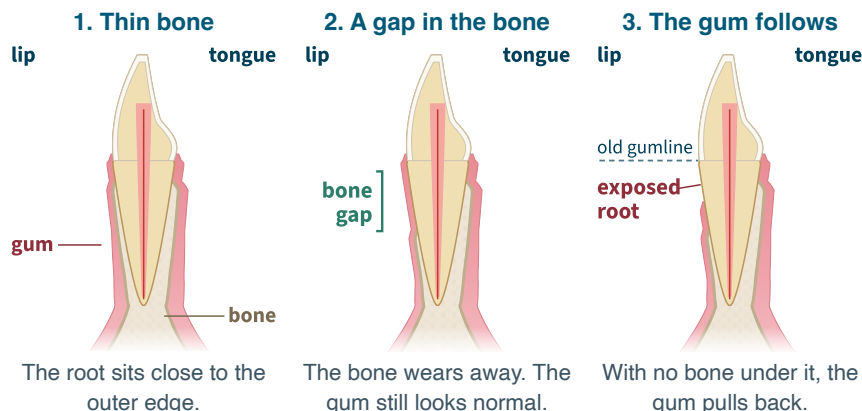


Why are my gums receding?

The gum sits on bone, and it follows the bone. Where the root of a tooth sits close to the edge of its bone, the bone over it is thin, and thin bone can give way. When it does, the gum pulls back after it and exposes the root.



The gum follows the bone

Under every area of recession, the bone has already pulled back. The gum doesn't recede on its own. It loses the bone that was holding it up.

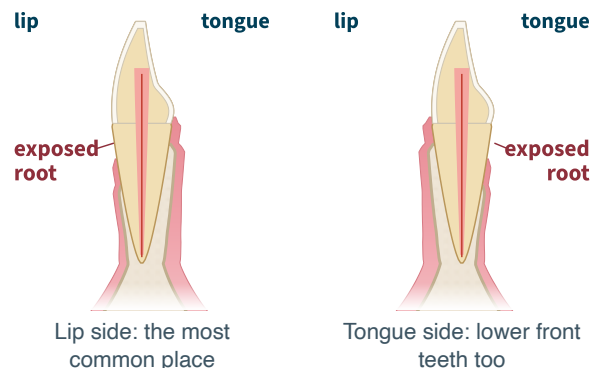
Many lower front teeth sit in bone thinner than a credit card at the neck of the tooth. Some people are built that way. Crowding, orthodontics, or a retainer wire that slowly changes shape can also move a root toward the thin edge.

What adds to it

Especially when the bone is already thin:

- Plaque and inflammation along the gumline, and gum disease
- Thin gums. Some people are born with them.
- Brushing too hard, especially with a stiff brush
- A tight lip or cheek attachment that tugs on the gum
- Smoking
- Crown or filling edges placed under the gum
- Tongue and lip piercings

Either side of the tooth



Will it get worse?

Some recession stays the same for years, even decades. Some becomes a problem almost overnight, often when the bacteria in the mouth shift and decay starts on the exposed root, which is much softer than enamel.

Left alone, most recession slowly gets deeper. It's also very common: more than 9 out of 10 US adults have at least one spot.

Sensitive to cold? Root has no enamel on it, so cold reaches the nerve more easily. Sensitivity toothpaste helps.

What we do

Measure it and keep track, at your exams, with photos and the 3D scan we take each year.

Brush gently. A soft brush, or an electric brush with light pressure. Don't count on a pressure sensor.

See a periodontist early. An evaluation by a gum specialist isn't a commitment to surgery. You'll know what can be done while the options are widest.

Gum grafts are the most predictable way to cover a root. We refer all grafting to the periodontist we work with.

Sometimes, move the root. Angling a root back toward the middle of its bone can shrink recession. Dr. Lee-Mirzayan makes small root-angle changes with Invisalign here.

Receding gums don't grow back on their own.

Call us if your gums are pulling back, a tooth looks longer than it used to, or the gumline stings with cold. We'll measure it, look at where the roots sit, and tell you honestly whether to watch it or have a periodontist look now.

