

CAMP HILL, Pa. (Sept. 19, 2024) — More than 90% of women aged 35 and older — about 50 million in the U.S. workforce — [experience one or more menopausal symptoms](#), including those that impact their oral health.

Menopause is a natural biological process signifying the end of a woman's childbearing years, where the ovaries gradually stop producing reproductive hormones like estrogen which play an important role in the health of the gums and bones that support teeth.

"While some of the uncomfortable symptoms experienced during menopause, like hot flashes, night sweats and sleep issues, are more easily recognizable, many women may be unaware of how it can put their oral health at risk," said Katie Deffke, DDS, dental director, United Concordia Dental.



Here are five menopausal symptoms to look for affecting the mouth:

- Gum recession and disease: Hormonal fluctuations can impact the immune system, making it easier for gums to pull away from the teeth, inflame and become infected. Gums may be swollen, appear pale or deep-red, and bleed when brushing and flossing.
- Dry mouth: Lower levels of the estrogen hormone can decrease saliva production, causing difficulty when swallowing. Saliva is full of healthy proteins, lubricating aids and agents that neutralize food acids. When there's less, it increases the risk of tooth decay and bad breath.
- Bone loss: Postmenopausal women are at greater risk for osteoporosis, a bone-weakening disease. While it impacts bone density throughout the body, it can cause bone loss in the jaw leading to tooth loosening and loss in the mouth.
- Temperature sensitivity in teeth: Hormonal changes can also increase the potential for sensitivity in the teeth, making it painful to consume hot or cold food and drinks.
- Other issues: A host of other menopausal symptoms may occur, including changes in taste and smell; a burning sensation in the tongue or lips; and oral thrush, a yeast infection in the mouth.

"It's beneficial to talk to your dentist whenever any major health changes occur — especially if you're experiencing dry mouth, gum issues or possible bone loss. They'll be able to help treat any symptoms and put you on the right track to better oral and overall health," said Deffke.

For more on oral health, visit the Wellness Resources section at [UnitedConcordia.com](https://www.unitedconcordia.com). [Sign up](#) to get the latest company news.

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