



Periodontal (Gum) Disease

Periodontal means “around the tooth.” That’s just where you’ll find periodontal disease – in the tissues and structures surrounding teeth such as the gums and jawbone. Periodontal disease (or gum disease) is a leading cause of tooth loss and is also associated with other chronic diseases, including diabetes and heart disease.

Caused by destructive bacteria found in plaque build-up, this disease can range from mild (known as gingivitis) to more severe (known as periodontitis). Prevention, and in some cases reversal, of the disease is possible with thorough home care and regular dental checkups and cleanings.

The American Dental Association offers the following risk factors and tips for identifying the condition. Factors that increase the risk of developing periodontal disease include:



Tobacco smoking or chewing.



Systemic diseases such as diabetes.



Bridges that no longer fit properly.



Medications such as steroids, some types of anti-epilepsy drugs, cancer therapy drugs and some calcium channel blockers.



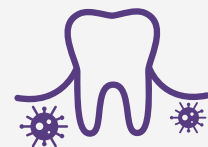
Crooked teeth.



Fillings that have become defective.



Pregnancy or use of oral contraceptives.



Genetic predisposition to gum disease.

Warning signs that can signal a problem:



Gums that bleed easily.



Red, swollen and tender gums.



Gums that have pulled away from the teeth.



Persistent bad breath or bad taste in mouth.



Permanent teeth that are loose or separating.



Changes in bite and pain while chewing.



Dentures not fitting correctly.

It's possible to have periodontal disease without any warning signs. That's why regular dental checkups and periodontal examinations are important. The dentist can evaluate your risk factors. Treatment methods depend upon the type of periodontal disease and how far the condition has progressed. Good oral hygiene at home is essential to helping keep periodontal disease from becoming more serious or returning. Periodontal disease doesn't have to end in tooth loss or health problems such as respiratory infections or strokes. **Brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, flossing regularly, eating a balanced diet and scheduling regular dental visits can help keep teeth and gums healthy.**

For more information visit

www.deltadentalnm.com/Wellness/Oral-Health-News.aspx