



Periodontal Disease Fact sheet

Periodontal Disease information:

Periodontal disease is mainly the result of infection and inflammation of the gums and bone that surround and support the teeth. In its early stage, called gingivitis, the gums can become swollen and red, and they may bleed. In its more serious form, called periodontitis, the gums can pull away from the tooth, bone can be lost, and the teeth may loosen or even fall out. Periodontal disease is mostly seen in adults. 75% of adults over the age of 35 have some form of periodontal disease as it is the most common infection of human beings. Periodontal disease is the leading cause of tooth loss in adults. As we get older there is a higher chance of losing teeth due to periodontal disease. We can keep our teeth for life if we prevent, treat and maintain periodontal disease.

Bacterial colonies will form a sticky film called plaque around the gum line causing gingivitis in just one week after lack of proper brushing and flossing. The plaque becomes hard on the tooth (called calculus or tartar) which could cause bone loss around teeth if not removed by a dentist in a timely manner.

Causes:

There are more than 500 types of bacteria living in our mouth, from which about 20 of these are considered periodontal pathogens. We can reduce the amount of these bacteria and change the environment so they cannot grow and damage our gums that easily through proper cleaning and care. There is no real cure for periodontal disease since we cannot eliminate the bacteria from the mouth. That is the reason why regular periodontal maintenance and cleaning is so important to the health of your teeth.

Risk Factors:

Periodontal pathogens, poor oral hygiene, family history, immune system problems, stress, hormonal changes, aging, cigarette smoking, diabetes, crowded teeth and defective dental work are risk factors for periodontal disease.

Family History:

Treatment of gum disease may involve entire families. Periodontal disease can run in families due to shared genetic background and or cross contamination of bacteria. If you have severe form of periodontal disease please make sure your immediate family (parents, spouse and kids) get screened as well.

Prevention:

We can stop the progression of the disease by frequent home care, routine professional cleaning by a dentist, antimicrobials and or surgeries as needed. Patients need to brush their teeth at least twice a day for two minutes and floss at least once a day. Interproximal brushes are recommended for patients with bone loss in between the teeth. Electric toothbrushes and Waterpick devices help patients achieve better home care. Three-month periodontal maintenance is recommended to patients with existing periodontal disease.



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Periodontal Diseases Can Affect Your General Health:

Your mouth is the window to your whole body health. Your mouth is part of your body and as any other part of your body can potentially affect other parts and organs. The health of your mouth can be an indicator of other things happening with your body.

Bacteremia (bacteria in the bloodstream) can occur in patients with periodontal disease and or any other tooth related infection. These bacteria can travel throughout the body and cause problems in different organs. Patients with severe periodontal disease had approximately four times more harmful bacterial products after chewing in their blood than those with moderate or no periodontal disease. Case reports of severe infections and/or even death associated with a tooth infection exist.

Periodontal disease and infection can affect other parts of body including brain, heart, lungs and an unborn child. Oral screening and dental cleaning before and during pregnancy is recommended for the health of the child.

Periodontal disease and inflammation associated with it have been associated with heart disease, respiratory disease, brain infection, premature labor, osteoporosis and even cancer. There is new research going on to find out the exact nature of this association.

Periodontal Disease Treatment:

Periodontal disease in the early stages can be treated by general dentists as well as periodontists. Moderate to severe cases of periodontitis, gum recession and tooth replacement with dental implants are generally referred to a periodontist who is a specialist in diagnosis, prevention and treatment of periodontal diseases. These treatments included non surgical and or surgical approaches. At your initial consultation visit your periodontist will evaluate the problem and will give you your treatment options.

Importance of Oral Cancer Screening:

Every hour one person dies in United States from oral cancer. Oral cancer accounts for 2-4% of cancers diagnosed in US annually. The 5-year survival rate for persons having oral cancer is 81% for those with localized early stage disease, 42% for patients with regional disease, and 17% for those with distant metastases. A dentist not only checks for the caries and periodontal disease, but also for any suspicious lesion in the mouth that could be precancerous or cancerous in nature through regular oral cancer screening. A thorough regular oral cancer screening by a dentist may result in finding the lesions in their early stages which is easy to treat. The suspicious lesions can be monitored and biopsied if needed. Smoking cigarettes, cigars, or from a Hookah, smokeless tobacco use, heavy alcohol consumption and HPV infection have been all recognized as risk factors for oral cancer. Please ensure your general oral health by visiting a dentist at least twice a year. People wearing dentures who are without teeth have to be screened for oral cancer by a dentist on routine basis as well.

Sharing is caring!

**Did you know that more than half of the American's do not see a dentist on a regular basis?
Please talk to your friends and family about the importance of their mouth in their overall health.
Please share your experience with them and refer them to our office for a consultation
appointment. We accept new patients especially great ones like you! Thank you for your trust!**