

# What is periodontal disease?

Caroline Brady, RDH

Periodontal Disease, also known as Gum Disease, is a chronic bacterial infection that affects the gums and bone supporting the teeth. Gum Disease has several stages, ranging from mild to severe. The mildest form of the disease is Gingivitis. It is typically identified as red, swollen gums, which can bleed easily. Gingivitis is often caused by inadequate oral hygiene and can easily be reversed with professional treatment and good homecare practices. If left untreated, Gingivitis can advance to Periodontitis. With time, plaque accumulates below the gum line, producing toxins, which irritate the gums, creating a chronic inflammatory response. The body tries to fight off these toxins and as a result, begins to destroy the ligaments and bone, which support the teeth. The gums detach below the gum line, creating a pocket. As the disease progresses, the pocket deepens and more bone is lost. Without strong bone support, teeth eventually loosen and may have to be removed.

What causes Periodontal Disease? Well, there can be a number of factors related to this disease. One, which has been discussed, is inadequate oral hygiene. It is important to take proper care of your teeth with daily brushing and flossing habits. Also, regular visits to the Dentist are important to help maintain good oral health. Other factors relating to Periodontal Disease are smoking, genetics, and medical conditions, such as Diabetes and heart conditions.

It is important to remember is that Periodontal Disease can be treated. In order to treat it, it must first be diagnosed. Dr.

Bond is able to identify Periodontal Disease quite easily. With the help of x-rays, he is able to view levels of bone surrounding the teeth. An evaluation of the gums is also performed in order to determine the level of severity of the disease. Once this information is gathered, Dr. Bond or your Hygienist can recommend a treatment, which is aimed at halting the disease process. Bone loss is not reversible, on its own, but can it can be stopped, or slowed down considerably. This is normally achieved through a series of deeper cleanings, called Scaling and Root Planing, which cleans the surface of your teeth and below the gum line, where the disease process is occurring. Occasionally, for patients with more advanced Gum Disease, a more frequent interval of professional periodontal maintenance, teeth cleanings may be recommended. Our Team's goal is for you to maintain a strong and healthy smile that lasts a lifetime.