

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOU ABOUT YOUR TEETH AND GUMS

According to The American Dental Association, three in four adults over 35 have some form of gum disease and a preponderance of new clinical research reveals that gum disease poses a far greater threat to health than just losing a tooth. Periodontal disease may actually increase your risk for a variety of health concerns including heart attacks, low birth weight babies, diabetes, and stroke.

Dr. Isadore Rosenfield, Health Editor of PARADE magazine – “People with chronically infected gums have twice as much heart disease as the rest of us. We have an imperative to treat gum disease – to save not only teeth but also patients.”

Dr. Steven Offenbacher, Director of the Center for Oral and Systemic Disease at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – “In many ways, periodontal disease is like high blood pressure – it’s painless and only becomes evident when it’s quite severe.”

All gum disease begins with the accumulation of plaque, a sticky deposit of bacteria, mucus and food particles that builds up along the gum line and between the teeth. Plaque can cause gingivitis – inflammation of the gums. Plaque must be removed daily to prevent buildup. Brushing and flossing, coupled with a minimum of twice-yearly professional cleanings, will combat gingivitis in most people.

If gingivitis is not treated, or is treated too late, the result is periodontitis. This occurs when plaque invades beneath the gum, turning into a hard substance called tartar. Tartar can only be removed during a professional cleaning. At this stage, skilled care is essential to stave off tooth loss. A procedure called scaling and root planning is performed to remove the hidden plaque and tartar from below the gum-line.

Do you have gum disease? Warning signs include red, swollen, tender, bleeding or receding gums; loose teeth; persistent bad breath; changes in tooth position; and the development of pockets between gums and teeth. It used to be that your dentist could only diagnose periodontal disease from X-rays that showed loss of bone around the teeth. The exciting news is that gum disease and periodontal disease can now be successfully treated **BEFORE** teeth get loose from bone loss. Your hygienist and dentist can measure the pockets and bleeding points around your teeth and institute non-surgical treatment before you suffer the irreversible bone destruction of periodontal disease.

So remember – **THE HYGIENISTS OF THE 21ST CENTURY DON'T JUST CLEAN TEETH – THEY SAVE LIVES!**