

## Periodontal (or Gum) Disease

Periodontal disease affects everyone. It can vary in severity from person to person and even tooth to tooth. Periodontal disease is usually divided up into two categories, gingivitis which involves the soft tissues only and periodontitis which also involves the surrounding bone.

### Gingivitis

Gingivitis describes the early stages of gum disease. Throughout the day and night, a sticky biofilm layer of plaque containing bacteria forms around our gum line which irritates the gums. The irritation leads to inflammation and causes bleeding, puffiness and sore gums. If the plaque is not removed, minerals from our saliva are deposited and the plaque hardens to become calculus commonly called tartar or calculus. Calculus further irritates our gums by hiding and protecting bacteria and is almost impossible to remove with just a toothbrush creating a vicious cycle of continued disease.

### Periodontitis

Gum disease is classified as periodontitis when the bacteria reaches the bone supporting our teeth. The bone is irritated by the bacteria and shrinks away from the tooth, leaving a space underneath the gums where even more bacteria can settle. The gums will not appear to be that different from usual. If the bone loss becomes significant the teeth become loose and even painful which could require the tooth to be extracted. Over the age of 40, more teeth are lost due to periodontal disease than anything else.

### What are the signs of gum disease?

- Bleeding gums
- Puffiness and redness
- Bad breath
- Teeth becoming loose
- Loss of gum tissue between and around teeth
- Hard or stained deposits on tooth surfaces

### Other health concerns linked with Periodontal disease

Periodontal disease can not only effect the health of your teeth, there has been a direct link between periodontal disease and Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke.

### Diabetes

People with Type II diabetes are 3 times more likely to develop periodontal disease (20 times more likely if they smoke). Periodontal disease disrupts glycemic control so for Type II diabetics, not only are they at risk of developing periodontal disease, periodontal disease also aggravates their diabetics.

### Heart Disease & Stroke

New research has shown links between Periodontal disease and Heart disease. The same bacteria that causes heart disease enter the bloodstream via sore infected gums. They then deposit in protein forming clots putting you at risk of hardened arteries which result in heart attack or stroke. The risk of heart attack is twice as high for individuals with severe periodontal disease.

### What can I do to prevent and fight gum disease?

The most important factor is effective oral hygiene. Regular correct tooth brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and flossing at least once a day is recommended.

Regular visits to the dentist are also important. At Cannon Hill Dental, dentists are able to assess and treat most gum disease. Treatment depends on the severity of gum disease. Someone with moderate build-ups will benefit from a clean and polish, while deep heavy deposits may require scaling and root planning.

At every exam appointment your dentist will check the health of you gums by probing around each tooth. They will record a score for each tooth so that we can monitor your progress. Bite Wing X-rays are taken approx every 2yrs so that we can monitor the bone levels around your teeth.

After a clean, appropriate oral hygiene techniques are taught and reinforced to ensure oral health is maintained at home. We may also refer you to experienced specialists in some cases because we believe they can obtain the best outcome possible. The outcome of treatment is then monitored until health is restored. Six monthly care appointments then allow us to make sure your oral health is maintained!

So if you are worried that gum disease may be affecting you please tell us at your next appointment.

### What does gum disease look like?



#### Healthy Gums

- Pink gums
- No bleeding when brushing and flossing
- Fresh breath

#### Gingivitis

- Red swollen gums
- Bleeding gums when flossing and brushing
- Possible bad breath or taste
- No bone loss
- No tooth mobility



#### Early Periodontitis

- Red swollen gums
- Bleeding gums when flossing and brushing
- Persistent bad breath or taste
- Slight bone loss
- Possible tooth mobility



#### Moderate Periodontitis

- Red swollen gums
- Bleeding gums when flossing and brushing
- Persistent bad breath or taste
- Moderate bone loss
- Tooth mobility and root exposure



#### Advanced Periodontitis

- Red swollen puffy gums
- Bleeding gums when flossing and brushing
- Persistent bad breath
- Severe bone loss
- Tooth loss

