

dental health



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Dental care can help prevent periodontal disease

Kids often lament daily dental care. Mom and Dad might insist kids brush their teeth each morning and before bed, but that doesn't mean kids enjoy these daily dental rituals.

While it's notoriously difficult to get kids to take dental care seriously, many adults also approach dental care with something less than an enthusiastic effort. Dental hygiene routines or visits to the dentist might not be welcomed with open arms, but their importance, especially with regards to preventing periodontal disease, is paramount. To understand that connection better, it can help to get a firmer grasp on periodontal disease, its potentially negative consequences and how to prevent it.

What is periodontal disease?

Periodontal disease is commonly referred to as gum disease. An infection of the tissues that surround and support the teeth, periodontal disease is a major cause of adult tooth loss. According to the American Dental Association, periodontal disease is often painless, and many adults may have it without even knowing it.

What causes periodontal disease?

Periodontal disease is caused by a sticky film

of bacteria that forms on the teeth. This film is called plaque, and the bacteria that forms creates toxins that can damage the gums.

Are there signs of periodontal disease?

There are signs that indicate the presence of periodontal disease, and anyone who notices these signs should see a dentist immediately. Indicators of periodontal disease include:

- gums that bleed when your brush your teeth
- red, swollen or tender gums
- persistent bad breath
- pus between the teeth and gums
- gums that have pulled away from the teeth
- loose teeth

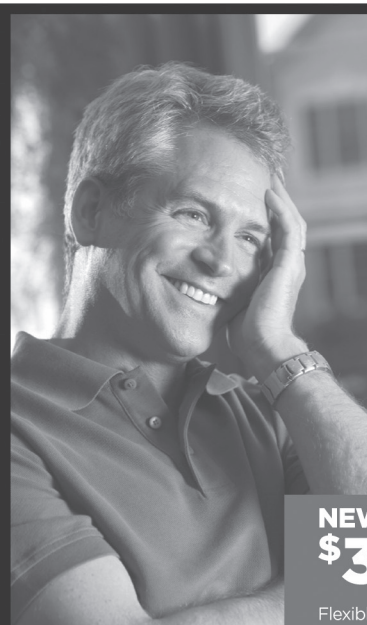
Can periodontal disease be prevented?

As harmful as periodontal disease can be, men and women should know it can be prevented. Taking good care of your teeth and making those dental appointments, no matter how much you might fear the dentist's chair, are great ways to prevent periodontal disease.

Keeping gums and teeth healthy requires a daily commitment, but that commitment is easy to make. The following are a few daily routines that can help prevent periodontal disease.

- Brush twice per day. Brushing twice daily removes plaque and reduces the risk for damaged gums. When brushing, the ADA recommends a soft-bristled toothbrush and toothpastes that contain fluoride, which strengthen the teeth and help prevent decay.
- Clean between the teeth every day. Floss or interdental cleaners remove bacteria from those areas a toothbrush just can't reach, such as between the teeth. Flossing is important, as the ADA notes that early periodontal disease can be reversed by daily brushing and flossing.
- Don't skip dental visits. Fear of the dentist's chair is not uncommon. Be it kids or adults, many people harbor a fear of going to the dentist, no matter how irrational that fear might be. But skipping dental visits is a recipe for disaster. When detected early, periodontal disease is rather easily reversed.

Periodontal disease often goes unnoticed, placing great emphasis on the individual to be proactive and take care of his or her teeth while visiting the dentist at least twice annually. More information on periodontal disease can be found at www.ada.org.



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