



What is Periodontal Disease

After your appointment today I thought it would be important to take a moment to review some of the facts about Periodontal Disease. Firstly it is important for you to understand that periodontal disease affects approximately 95% of the adult population. Periodontal Disease is basically a disease of “pockets”. A **pocket** is the space between your gum tissue and the root of your tooth. This space tends to trap bacteria which can cause all kinds of problems if left to their own devices. These pockets are analogous to sending your pants to the dry cleaners. Invariably, some of the lint in your pants pockets is left after the dry cleaning process. Periodontal pockets tend to trap bacterial plaque in much the same way. The dry cleaner's chemicals can not reach all the way down into the deep recesses of your pant's pockets. Well, neither can your toothbrush reach into your periodontal pockets to get at those incredibly damaging bacteria. It is the job of the Periodontist to reduce your pocket depths to make them more accessible for cleaning.

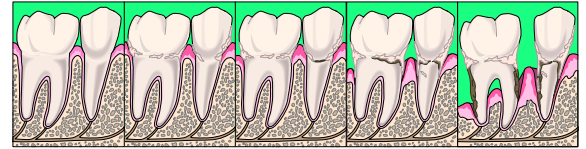


Figure 1 Stages of Periodontal Disease

What causes Periodontal disease?

Bacterial plaque! Plaque is simply defined as an organized group of bacteria which causes inflammation and ultimately the destruction of gum tissues and bone. Of course, there are other causative factors such as nutrition, genetics, smoking, missing teeth, poor occlusion (bite), and various systemic diseases. Bacterial plaque, however, is the primary cause of Periodontal Disease.

What are some of the Symptoms of Periodontal Disease?

- Reddening of the gum tissue around teeth
- Bleeding gums
- Excessive formation of calculus leading to swelling gums
- Gum Abscesses
- Drifting or loosening of teeth resulting in opening up of spaces between teeth.
- Noticeable mouth odor

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