

Preventing Periodontal Disease

Periodontal disease, also known as gum disease, is caused when bacteria builds up between the gums and teeth. When the bacteria begin to grow it forms a protective film or gel called plaque. This plaque helps to create a more ideal environment for the bacteria; protects the bacteria from your bodies' defences and also protects them from antibiotics. Once the bacteria/plaque colonize the teeth and root surfaces the gums surrounding the tooth can become inflamed.

If left untreated, this inflammation can cause the gums and supporting bone structure to deteriorate. This can lead to gum recession and tooth loss. In addition, research has shown that gum disease may be associated with other diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.

Luckily, periodontal disease can be preventable. Adding these habits to your daily routine can help.

Brush your teeth. Brushing after meals helps remove food debris and plaque trapped between your teeth and gums. Don't forget to include your tongue, bacteria love to hide there.

Floss. Flossing at least once a day helps remove food particles and plaque between teeth and along the gum line that your toothbrush can't quite reach.

Rinse with mouthwash. Using a mouthwash can help reduce plaque and can remove remaining food particles that brushing and flossing missed.

Know your risk. Age, smoking, diet and genetics can all increase your risk for periodontal disease. If you are at increased risk, be sure to talk with your dental professional.

See a periodontist. Get an annual comprehensive periodontal evaluation from a dental professional. A comprehensive periodontal evaluation looks at your teeth, plaque level, gums, bite, bone structure and other risk factors for periodontal disease. Identifying symptoms of gum disease early is key to protecting your teeth and gums.