

Periodontal Disease

Periodontal disease is a major cause of tooth loss in adults

Early and moderate periodontal disease may exhibit few, if any, symptoms. However, warning signs of **advanced periodontal disease** may include red, swollen, or bleeding gums; persistent bad breath; permanent teeth that are loose or separating; or changes in the way your teeth fit together when you bite.

There are many stages and forms of periodontal disease, including:

GINGIVITIS

Mild inflammation of the gums due to plaque buildup



Gums are red and/or sore and bleed when probed

PERIODONTITIS

If left untreated, gum infection damages bone and supporting tissues.

Gum separates from tooth



Bone level deteriorates

ADVANCED PERIODONTITIS

At this stage, gums recede further and separate from the tooth.

Pus may develop



Bone continues to deteriorate

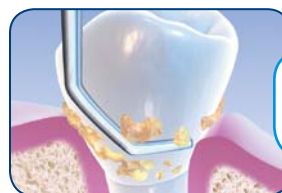
Tooth is loosened, may fall out

CHECKING FOR PERIODONTAL DISEASE

During each routine checkup, your dentist will examine you for periodontal disease. A **periodontal probe** is used to determine if there is any breakdown in the gum tissue attachment or if **pockets** have developed between your gums and teeth.

TREATING AND PREVENTING PERIODONTAL DISEASE

Treatment will depend on the type of periodontal disease and how far the condition has progressed. Treatment options include:



Scaling—cleans the teeth to remove deposits above and below the gumline



Root planing—smoothes rough root surfaces so the gum can heal



Oral irrigation—directs liquid below the gumline to flush out and kill germs and allow the regrowth of healthy tissue

If deep pockets are found and bone has been destroyed, your dentist may recommend **periodontal surgery**.

To help protect against periodontal disease, it is key to prevent the buildup of plaque. Remember to have regular professional cleanings in addition to brushing and flossing every day.