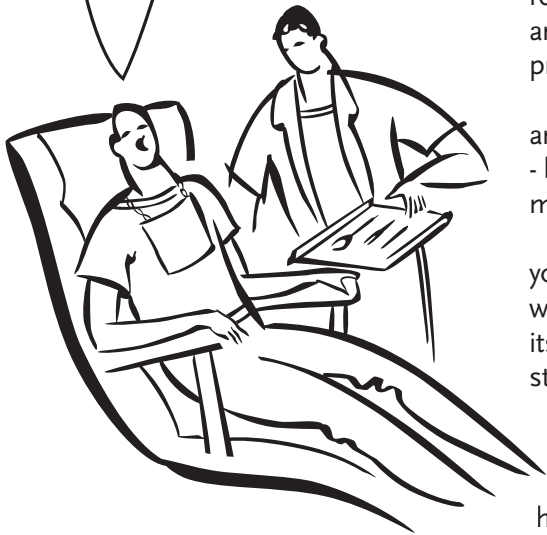


*Ask your
Dentist!*

*“What is
Periodontal
Disease?”*



Every day, plaque forms on your teeth. Periodontal Disease begins when bacterial infection caused by the plaque inflames gum tissue around your teeth and below the gumline where you can't see. This is usually a painless process. Over time, gum tissue and bone that support your teeth become destroyed. If left untreated, the condition often leads to tooth loss.

Am I at risk?

It's estimated that as many as eight out of ten Canadian adults suffer from some form of Periodontal Disease. If you smoke, have diabetes, or if you've never made a habit of flossing your teeth each day, you may be at even greater risk.

What are the warning signs?

At first, Periodontal Disease has few symptoms. As it progresses, you might notice your gums bleed easily, especially when you are brushing your teeth. You might notice that your gums are quite red, instead of their normally healthy pink colour, and you may suffer from bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth. You should see your dentist right away.

These are all signs that Periodontal Disease is creating pockets by attacking the gums and the bones that support your teeth.

How can I prevent it?

Periodontal Disease can almost always be prevented. Basic home care and regular visits to your dentist for an examination and a professional cleaning are the best ways to start. And if you smoke, consider quitting. Tobacco use promotes Periodontal Disease.

Brush your teeth at least twice a day with a soft-bristle toothbrush and floss daily. Dental floss cleans the areas your toothbrush can't reach - between your teeth and under the gumline. Rinsing with an antibacterial mouthrinse can help, but does not replace flossing.

A professional cleaning in your dental office will remove the plaque you've missed and the hard tartar you can't remove yourself. Your dentist will also check for early warning signs that Periodontal Disease is creeping its way into spots you can't see. In its earliest stages, Periodontal Disease can often be reversed.

Can Periodontal Disease be treated?

Prevention is the best method of making sure your teeth and gums stay healthy, but if Periodontal Disease is discovered after the early stages it can often be successfully stopped. Possible treatment includes root planing (deep cleaning) and in some cases periodontal surgery to the "pockets" beneath the gumline or to regenerate damaged tissue. Your dentist may refer you to a dental specialist called a Periodontist for further treatment.



*Information courtesy of your
dentist and the Nova Scotia
Dental Association
www.healthyteeth.org*