

WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT GUM DISEASE?

Periodontal (gum) disease is a condition in which bacteria attack the tissues that surround and support the teeth. It is a progressive problem that if not treated, will eventually result in tooth loss. Because it is often painless patients are not even aware that they have a problem until the gums and bone are seriously affected.

The early stage of gum disease is called gingivitis. Gingivitis is a condition in which the gums are inflamed or swollen. A crevice (or pocket) between the tooth and gum can be up to 4mm deep. This indicates that the bone is probably still in good shape, but the supporting gum tissue has begun to detach.

As these crevices deepen to 4-6mm deep, mild to moderate periodontitis sets in. The bone begins to erode and without treatment the crevice deepens even more and eventually the tooth loosens and falls out.

Recent research suggests that there may be a link between periodontal disease and other health concerns such as stroke, cardiovascular disease, bacterial pneumonia and there is an increased risk during pregnancy. Tobacco use also increases the risk for gum disease.

Early signs of gum disease include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Gums that bleed easily**
- 2) Red, swollen or tender gums**
- 3) Gums that have pulled away from the teeth**
- 4) Persistent bad breath or bad taste**

Prevention is always the first line of defense. Good oral hygiene begins at home. Brushing twice a day and flossing once a day will prevent plaque from accumulating. Regular dental check-ups are also important because the dentist or hygienist will measure the crevices and advise treatment accordingly.

Periodontal disease will not go away by itself. Preventing and treating the disease is the best way to keep your smile healthy! Call the office of Dr. Charles E. Lee, III at (770) 965-5548 to schedule your preventative dental appointment today. We look forward to meeting you and your family!