



FOCUS ON DENTAL HEALTH

Nothing but the Tooth: Understanding Periodontal Disease



Periodontal disease, more commonly known as gum disease, is an extremely prevalent issue affecting adults' dental health. In 2020, it was estimated that 50% of adults in the U.S. aged 30 years and older have some form of periodontal disease.¹

What Is Periodontal Disease?

Simply put, periodontal disease is an infection of the gums. With the human mouth constantly housing bacteria, it's easy for plaque to build up on the teeth and harden. Without proper dental hygiene, hardened plaque can eventually form tartar that can only be removed by professional cleaning.² This build-up on the teeth and gums can develop into mild to severe cases of periodontal disease.

What Are Some Common Symptoms of Periodontal Disease?²

- Persistent bad breath
- Red or swollen gums
- Tender or bleeding gums
- Pain when chewing
- Loose or sensitive teeth
- Receding gums

How Can You Prevent and Treat Periodontal Disease?¹

The simplest way to prevent periodontal disease is by maintaining proper dental hygiene. Healthy dental care includes:

- Brushing and flossing well
- Scheduling regular dentist visits
- Looking out for symptoms in your teeth and gums

Treatment of periodontal disease varies depending on its severity. The dentist will use X-rays and probing to detect how advanced the disease is and decide on treatment options accordingly. Treatment options can include a deep cleaning of the mouth, medication, corrective surgery or teeth removal.

VBA, in partnership with TruAssure Insurance Company, offers plans that provide easier access to dental care. To learn more, visit vbaplans.com/dental.



VBA dental plans are administered and underwritten by TruAssure and are offered in association with the DenteMax Plus dental network arrangement, which includes participating dentists from the United Concordia, DenteMax and Connection dental networks in all states but North Carolina, where the DenteMax Plus network arrangement includes DenteMax and Connection dental networks.

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1. Illinois Department of Public Health - Division of Oral Health (<https://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/Fast%20Facts%20Periodontal%20Disease.pdf>) 2. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/health-info/gum-disease/more-info>) 3. Cleveland Clinic (<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/21482-gum-periodontal-disease>) 4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/conditions/periodontal-disease.html>) 5. Healthline (<https://www.healthline.com/health/gingivitis#associated-health-conditions>)

Early Stages vs. Advanced Stages³

Early stage periodontal disease is often referred to as Gingivitis and can be reversible with timely treatment.

Advanced periodontal disease is known as Periodontitis. It occurs when the gums' inner layer pulls away from the teeth, developing pockets. It leads to loss of bone supporting the teeth.

Did You Know?



Periodontal disease increases with age, affecting about 70% of adults 65 years and older.⁴



Periodontal disease is linked with an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke and lung disease.⁵



Periodontal disease is more common in men than women.⁴