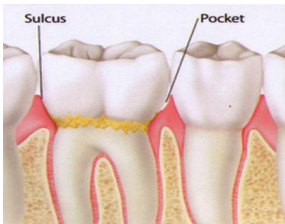


The Four Levels of Periodontal Disease

Periodontal Disease (also known as Gum Disease) is an ongoing infection in the gums and jawbone surrounding your teeth. It is a health risk and leads to dental problems, tooth loss, and other potential systemic risks/issues.

How Periodontal Disease Progresses

The Four Levels	Warning Signs & Symptoms	Treatment & Consequences If Untreated
Gingivitis: Level 1 Infectious periodontal bacteria (plaque) get into the space (sulcus) around your teeth and start infecting your gums. 	At this stage, there are few signs or symptoms. Some indications of gingivitis include: • Occasional bad breath • Redness and swelling of the gums • Bleeding when flossing • Probing depths of 2-4 mm <i>*Note:</i> Bone loss has not yet started The infection is completely reversible	The main treatment for gingivitis is good oral hygiene (brushing & flossing) at home and regular dental check-ups with your dentist or periodontist. If not treated, gingivitis can lead to: • Periodontal disease • Deeper pockets of infection • Gingival abscesses • Cavities & other dental procedures • Eventual tooth loss
Slight Periodontal Disease: Level 2 Moderate Periodontal Disease: Level 3 The infection now extends deeper under your gums and is destroying the supporting bone. Your bacteria types change and cause more bone loss as your pockets get deeper. Eliminating the bacteria through daily oral hygiene is impossible. 	At this stage, periodontal disease can remain "silent" with few signs and symptoms. Some signs to look for are: • Increased redness of gums • Worsening bad breath • Bleeding on brushing and flossing • Slight: Probing depths 4-5 mm • Moderate: Probing depths 6-7 mm • Pain is unlikely despite the deeper infection and bone loss <i>*Note:</i> At this point, infectious periodontal bacteria are regularly entering your blood stream and stressing your immune system.	Treatment for slight to moderate periodontal disease can include scaling & root planing (deep cleaning). This removes the deep deposits of bacteria (plaque and calculus) causing your gum infection. If not treated (or only partially treated) and monitored closely, periodontitis can lead to: • Progressing bone loss • Tooth/teeth loosening • More bleeding & pus • Worsening infectious bacteria • Gum recession and sensitivity • Shifting teeth
Advanced Periodontal Disease: Level 4 The infection further deepens and the bacteria becomes more virulent and disease-causing. Your teeth are now prone to further bone loss and loosening. 	Periodontal disease at this stage is no longer "silent". The risk of tooth loss increases significantly. 50% - 90% bone loss can occur. Periodontal abscesses occur more frequently. Spontaneous bleeding and pus drainage occurs. Some signs include: • Redness, swelling, and oozing gums • Cold sensitivity and tooth mobility worsens • Pocket depths of 7+ mm • Pain when chewing • Severe bad breath	The infection is now so deep that periodontal surgery or periodontal laser therapy is needed to clean out these deeper pockets of bacteria. If not treated and monitored closely, advanced periodontitis leads to: • Gum recession and cold sensitivity • Spaces/gaps between teeth • Shifting and loose teeth • Teeth loss & then dentures • Bacteria readily enters the blood stream. This contributes to other systemic health problems.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is it important to treat Periodontal Disease quickly?

Periodontal Disease is a continuing infection in the gums and bone around your teeth. If left untreated, this infection can cause tooth loss and many other problems. Periodontal infections tend to occur in “bursts of destruction”. If you have been diagnosed with periodontal disease, you might have experienced such a “burst” and it is important to get it treated quickly before things get worse.

2. Why can't I feel Periodontal Disease?

While 75% of all tooth loss is due to periodontal disease, its symptoms are usually NOT very noticeable. Your dentist or periodontist will be able to tell if you have periodontal disease and to what stage it has progressed. In its more advanced stages, you might notice bleeding while brushing or some spaces between your teeth.

3. How is Periodontal Disease Treated?

Periodontal bacteria must be removed before it causes more damage. This is often accomplished through careful deep cleaning of the root surfaces. In advanced cases, this can be done using a special periodontal dental laser or other proven surgical techniques. The nature of the periodontal disease will influence which treatment option is recommended. Our focus is on giving you predictable results and long term health benefits.

4. Why is the Periodontal Laser Treatment recommended (Periolase)?

- Recovery time is very rapid and patient discomfort is minimal.
- The Periolase laser precisely targets and removes diseased tissues, even deeper bacterial deposits.
- Minimal disruption to daily life. You can return to your daily routine after treatment.
- Minimal post-treatment complications.
- Minimal gum recession following treatment.

* Laser therapy is also an excellent for treating periodontal disease around dental implants (called peri-implantitis). Your general dentist or periodontist will recommend laser therapy if you are a candidate.

5. Is Periodontal Treatment Successful?

Yes, periodontal disease can be treated quite successfully. Afterwards, most patients will need routine periodontal cleanings to maintain their teeth. Periodontal disease prevention is important for long term teeth retention and infection control. Fortunately, newer techniques and equipment have greatly increased patient comfort and treatment results. Successful treatment will help you keep your teeth with improved health, longevity, and stability. Treatment can also help prevent your periodontal infection from getting into your bloodstream and contributing to other health problems.

In Summary

The good news is that Periodontal Disease is quite treatable if caught early. What's important is to see your dentist or periodontist regularly and follow his/her instructions regarding treatment.

We hope that this article has been helpful. If you have any questions about periodontal disease or treatment, please do not hesitate to ask your dentist or us.

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