

## Periodontal Disease

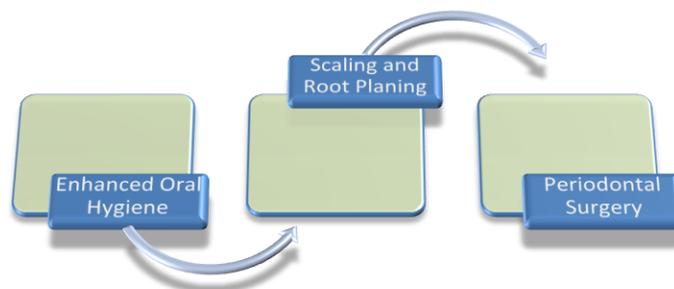
Periodontal (gum) diseases, including gingivitis and periodontitis, are serious infections that, left untreated, can lead to tooth loss and contribute to systemic illness and disease. The word *periodontal* literally means "around the tooth." Periodontal disease is a chronic bacterial infection that affects the gums and bone supporting the teeth. Periodontal disease can affect one tooth or many teeth. It begins when the bacteria in plaque (the sticky, colorless film that constantly forms on your teeth) causes the gums to become inflamed.

### Gingivitis

Gingivitis is the mildest form of periodontal disease. It causes the gums to become red, swollen, and bleed easily. There is usually little or no discomfort at this stage. Gingivitis is often caused by inadequate oral hygiene. Gingivitis is reversible with professional treatment and proper oral home care.

### Periodontitis

Untreated gingivitis can advance to periodontitis. With time, plaque can spread and grow below the gum line. Toxins produced by the bacteria in plaque irritate the gums. The toxins stimulate a chronic inflammatory response in which the body in essence turns on itself, and the tissues and bone that support the teeth are broken down and destroyed. Gums separate from the teeth, forming pockets (spaces between the teeth and gums) that become infected. As the disease progresses, the pockets deepen and more gum tissue and bone are destroyed. Often, this destructive process has very mild symptoms. Eventually, teeth can become loose and may have to be removed.



As Champions for Oral Health, our office is dedicated to the overall health of your mouth, not just your teeth. Treatment for periodontal disease follows a systematic approach of removing toxins and eliminating inflammation beginning with personalized oral hygiene instruction. We will make sure that you know how to care for your own teeth at home. We will train you to use oral health aids correctly and effectively. If necessary, non-surgical therapies will be recommended to remove bacteria and toxins from the root surfaces of your teeth. Depending upon the outcome of initial therapies, surgical interventions may be necessary to correct damage to bone and arrest the disease process.

**Don't lose your teeth to a silent disease!! Ask us how we can help you.**