

# Periodontal Disease

Don't Wait  
Until It Hurts

## What is Periodontal Disease?

If you were diagnosed with periodontal disease, you are not alone. Many others have the same problem. Treatment is the first step in preventing tooth loss.

The word periodontal means "around the tooth." Healthy gum tissue fits like a cuff around each tooth. Where the gum line meets the tooth, it forms a slight v-shaped crevice called a sulcus. In healthy teeth, this space is usually three millimeters or less.

Periodontal diseases are infections that affect the tissues and bone that support teeth. As the tissues are damaged, the sulcus develops into a pocket that is greater than three millimeters. Generally, the more severe the disease, the greater the pocket depth and bone loss. The enlarged pockets allow harmful bacteria to grow and make it difficult to practice effective oral hygiene. Left untreated, periodontal diseases may eventually lead to tooth loss.



### How would I know if I had periodontal disease?

It's possible to have periodontal disease without apparent symptoms. That's why regular dental checkups and periodontal examinations are very important.

**Several warning signs can signal a problem. If you notice any of the following, see your dentist:**

- Gums that bleed easily
- Red, swollen, or tender gums
- Gums that have pulled away from your teeth
- Persistent bad breath
- Pus between the teeth and gums
- Loose or separating teeth
- A change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- A change in the fit of partial dentures