

Do you have periodontal disease?

Questions about signs of periodontal disease

Periodontal disease has been called a silent disease. In most cases, people don't have pain or notice symptoms until the disease is fairly advanced. By learning the symptoms of gingivitis, which is the mildest form of periodontal disease, treatment can be obtained in the early stages. The major warning signs for gingivitis are red, swollen gums that bleed when you brush your teeth. As the disease progresses to periodontitis, you may notice bad breath that won't go away, a bad taste in your mouth and sensitive teeth. Eventually, your teeth may loosen, causing a change in your bite — how your teeth fit together. Even dentures may no longer fit properly.

If you answer “yes” to any of the following questions, the American Academy of Periodontology urges you to make an appointment with your dentist right away. Your dentist can screen for periodontal disease and refer you to a periodontist if necessary:

- ▶ Do your gums bleed when you brush your teeth and/or eat hard or rough foods?
- ▶ Are your gums red, swollen or tender? Do you have sores in your mouth?
- ▶ Are your gums receding? Have they pulled back from your teeth?
- ▶ Do your teeth appear longer?
- ▶ Are spaces developing between your teeth?
- ▶ Do you clench or grind your teeth?
- ▶ Do you have bad breath that you can't get rid of?
- ▶ Does pus ever appear between your teeth and gums?
- ▶ Are any of your teeth loose?
- ▶ Has there been a change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite?
- ▶ If you have partial dentures, has their fit changed?

Continues ▶



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- ▶ Have you ever had gum problems, or gum infection or inflammation?
- ▶ Do you have a family history of gum disease?
- ▶ Do you smoke or use tobacco products?
- ▶ Are you pregnant?
- ▶ Do you have excessive stress in your life?

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Sources:

National Women's Health Resource Center, Inc. National Women's Health Report: The Women's Guide to Oral Health.
February 2000.

American Academy of Periodontology

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