

Contributing Factors to Periodontal Disease

Periodontal disease cannot occur without the presence of bacteria. Inadequate oral hygiene and the lack of professional dental cleanings are the single most common reasons for periodontal disease. Unfortunately, many people make themselves more susceptible and experience accelerated gum and bone damage due to factors other than bacteria.

Contributing Factors

·1 Smoking- Smokers are more susceptible to periodontal disease for a variety of reasons. Most important is that chronic tobacco use is known to lower your immune system ability to fight off infection. Smoking causes stain to develop on teeth making the accumulation of plaque easier. Smoking also dries out the mouth reducing saliva flow and makes the mouth less self cleansing.

·2 Diabetes- Uncontrolled diabetics are more susceptible to periodontal disease and experience more damage when gum disease is present. Diabetes inhibits the function of the smaller blood vessels in the gum tissue, reducing the ability of our white blood cells (immune system) to fight against this infection. Uncontrolled diabetics find it more difficult to control their diabetes if they are suffering from periodontal disease.

·3 Genetics- A significant percentage of our population is more susceptible to gum disease because their body doesn't fight-off this kind of infection well. This inherited trait doesn't mean you will have periodontal disease. It just means you have to be more careful and practice better prevention. If your parents lost their teeth as¹ adults, you should check and see if you're developing a problem.

·4 Stress- Stress contributes to a multitude of medical problems. With regard to gum disease, stress can cause chemicals that naturally occur in our body to increase, resulting in an environment more likely to encourage the development of periodontal disease. Stress also lowers our immune systems ability to fight infection.

·5 Clenching and Grinding- Stress is often the cause behind clenching and grinding. If periodontal disease is present, clenching or grinding will accelerate the normal rate of bone damage.

·6 Medications- There are a number of commonly used medications that can cause side effects that show-up in the mouth. These can often further complicate a periodontal problem. Make sure to include all medicines you are taking or have recently taken on your health history so the doctor can know how best to treat you.

·7 Hormonal Changes- Pregnancy, puberty and chronic stress can cause changes to the normal hormone levels. Pregnant women are more susceptible to periodontal infection due to hormone changes. If a preexisting periodontal infection exists and then a woman gets pregnant the infection is likely to accelerate. This is often times the starting point for many women to develop periodontal disease.

·8 Systemic Diseases- Any disease or medical condition that limits your immune system from functioning normally will make you more susceptible to periodontal disease or cause an existing problem to accelerate.