

# Prevention

*Everyone should understand that periodontal disease is preventable. Years ago it was commonly thought that losing teeth, as you got older was a natural course of living. Of course, this is incorrect.*

*Periodontal disease is caused by bacteria that collect on our teeth every day. If the bacteria is removed once every 24 hours, there is no possible way this disease process can begin.*

*In my opinion there are four critical parts to preventing periodontal disease. First, you have to remove the plaque from your teeth every day so you need to be consistent and remain motivated. Second, you need to practice good technique. If you miss certain areas you consistently leave bacteria behind and this has the same results as not cleaning. Third, understand that certain teeth and areas of the mouth are high-risk areas that need additional attention and cleaning time. The molar teeth are an example simply because they are so far in the back of the mouth their easier to miss and less time is often spent.*

*Everyone's mouth has its own high-risk areas and people need to have these areas identified and focus on them. Fourth, professional maintenance or regular check-ups and cleanings. The time between professional cleanings should be quarterly or every three months. The old standard of six-month check-ups has never been accurate or based on scientific data. This is especially true for a person with a history of periodontal disease. I recommend four specific techniques to remove plaque daily. Flossing, brushing, use of a rubber tip stimulator and a proxy brush (a small brush to clean between the teeth) are all most people need to practice successful prevention. There are many new mechanical cleaning devices now on the market. Some are good and some are over rated. This is also true for claims made about toothpastes, mouthwashes and other topical oral hygiene*

*products. I will be happy to discuss the pros and cons of these products at your first visit. Always remember, you can prevent a periodontal problem from beginning. If one already exists, get the proper treatment to remove the infection and then prevent future problems with a good maintenance plan.*