

# Gum Disease

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is gum disease?**

Gum disease or periodontal disease, is a serious infection that if left untreated can lead to tooth loss. Periodontal disease is a chronic infection that affects the gums and bones supporting the teeth.

### **How can I tell if I have gum disease?**

In the mildest form of the disease, inflammation of the gums or *gingivitis*, gums redden, swell and bleed easily. You may also experience bad breath.

### **What causes gum disease?**

Bacterial plaque is a sticky colourless film that constantly grows in our mouth. If this plaque is not removed by daily brushing and flossing, it mixes with saliva and hardens. This calcified plaque is known as tartar or calculus. Once hardened, it can only be removed at your dental office. Calculus is a major contributing factor of gum disease. Other factors such as smoking, genetics, and pregnancy can also affect the health of your gums.

### **What can I do to improve the health of my gums?**

Get in the habit of brushing your teeth every morning and every night to remove plaque. To clean between you should also use dental floss daily. You can speak to your dental hygienist to ask about other ways to clean in between your teeth. Regular dental check-ups and cleanings will help insure that you have healthy gums.

Children can visit the WRHA Dental Clinic at Machray School at 940-2090.



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