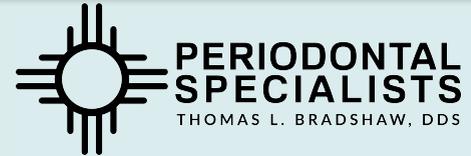




ASSESSING YOUR RISK FOR PERIODONTAL DISEASE

American Academy of Periodontology



754 South Main St., STE 7
Saint George, UT 84770
(435) 652-1605
www.gumexpert.com
bradshawdds@gmail.com



Periodontal disease or “gum disease” is typically caused by a build-up of plaque beneath the gum line. The bacteria in the plaque ignite the body’s inflammatory response, and the gums become red, swollen, and even bloody. While the main cause of periodontal disease is inflammation as a result of bacteria, other habits or environmental conditions, referred to as risk factors, can increase the likelihood that an individual will develop gum disease.

Common risk factors of periodontal disease include:

Age: Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that almost half of Americans over the age of 30 have some form of periodontal disease. In adults 65 and older, prevalence rates increase to 70.1 percent.

Smoking/tobacco use: Studies have shown tobacco use to be one of the most significant risk factors in the development and progression of periodontal disease.

Genetics: Research has found that a family history of periodontal disease may increase a person’s susceptibility to gum disease. Genetic testing can be conducted to identify if you are predisposed to periodontal disease.

Stress: Stress can make it more difficult for the body to fight off infection, including periodontal disease.

Medication: Some drugs like oral contraceptives, anti-depressants, and

certain heart medicines can affect your periodontal health.

Poor nutrition and obesity: A diet low in nutrients can make it harder for the body to fight off infection. Research has also found obesity may increase the risk of periodontal disease.

Poor oral hygiene: Ignoring teeth and gums allows plaque to build up along the gum line. Not routinely brushing and flossing can easily lead to gingivitis, the first stage of periodontal disease.

Other systemic diseases: Recent studies have linked diabetes, cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis and erectile dysfunction to periodontal disease. These and other systemic diseases could interfere with the body’s inflammatory system and may worsen the condition of the gums.

It is recommended that you see a periodontist or dentist once a year for a comprehensive periodontal evaluation to assess gum health. If you are experiencing any of the risk factors mentioned, inform your periodontist, dentist, or hygienist so he or she can look for early signs of periodontal disease.

Considering risk factors as part of the treatment planning process allows for proactive management of an individual’s periodontal health and can potentially reduce the need for more complex periodontal procedures in the future.

How do dental professionals assess risk for periodontal disease?

Your periodontist, dentist, or dental hygienist will assess your risk factors for periodontal disease as part of the comprehensive periodontal evaluation. This will help better predict the likelihood that you will develop periodontal disease or that your condition will worsen. It will assist your periodontist or dentist in determining the best personalized course of treatment for you.