

## Periodontal Disease

Periodontal disease is an infection of the gums (gingiva) and bone surrounding your teeth. It is caused by bacterial infections that attack the gums, ligaments, and bone. Although the body has some natural defenses that resist bacterial attacks, these may not fully protect the gum and bone from inflammation and infection. There are several kinds of periodontal diseases. They are most often painless and can go unnoticed until they are very advanced. Most forms progress slowly, but other forms may progress very rapidly. Periodontal disease can occur at any age. Unless you are having regular dental exams including a complete periodontal exam, you may not be aware that you have a problem until your gums and bone have become severely infected.

Warning signs:

- Gums that bleed easily
- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Gums that have pulled away from your teeth
- Pus around the gums
- Bad breath that doesn't go away
- Teeth that are getting loose or shifting
- Changes in the way your teeth fit when you bite together
- Changes in the way a partial denture fits

Can periodontal disease be treated?

Yes! If you go for regular dental cleanings and exams, then Dr. Burba can detect it in its earliest stages when it is reversible. In the early stages, the treatment may just be more frequent, thorough dental cleanings. Once it has been allowed to progress to more advanced Periodontitis, where the bone is being lost, then Dr. Burba will recommend more extensive treatments.

Periodontal disease will never go away by itself. Only by receiving the proper treatments, and by caring for your teeth and gums after treatment can you keep periodontal disease from destroying your gums and bone.

Factors that increase risk of periodontal disease:

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Smoking or chewing tobacco (increases risk of developing periodontal disease and it is more likely to be more severe than someone who doesn't use tobacco)

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Bridges that no longer fit properly

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Misaligned teeth or fillings that have become defective (contribute to plaque retention )

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Clenching or grinding (contributes to the rate of bone loss)

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Pregnancy or use of oral contraceptives (increases hormone levels which makes the gums more sensitive to the toxins in plaque)

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Systemic disease ( AIDS or Diabetes can lower your body's resistance to infection making periodontal disease more severe)

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Many medications (steroids, Antiepilepsy drugs, cancer therapy drugs, some calcium channel blockers, and oral contraceptives can affect the gums)

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Poor diet (may cause more rapid progression)