

How can I tell if I have periodontal disease?

Common signs of gum disease include:

- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Persistent bad breath
- Gums that bleed easily
- Loose or separating teeth
- A change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite

However, many people with periodontal disease **do not experience any symptoms** or pain. In fact, approximately 75 percent of American adults have the disease in some form, but the majority of them don't know they have it. That is why it is so important to see a dental professional regularly.

*Approximately 75% of Americans have periodontal disease, but the majority of them **don't know** they have it.*

Source: American Academy of Periodontology, 2009

Please call our office today at (910) 256.8486 to schedule your periodontal evaluation.



Phyllis B. Cook, DDS, MPH

Periodontics & Dental Implants

Phone: (910) 256.8486

Fax: (910) 256.8449

7028 Wrightsville Avenue

Wilmington, NC 28403

For more information, please visit us on the Web.

www.phylliscook.com

The Perio-Cardio Connection



Important information about your oral and cardiovascular health from Dr. Phyllis B. Cook

What is periodontal disease?

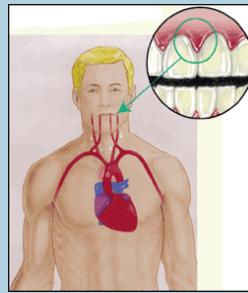
Also known as **gum disease**, periodontal disease is a serious bacterial infection of the gums and tissues supporting the teeth. It is caused by a **buildup of plaque**—a sticky film that forms on your teeth. If not removed every day with proper dental hygiene, plaque can turn into a rough, yellowish substance called **tartar or calculus**. Left untreated, periodontal disease can cause:

- Severe gum recession
- Bone and tissue reduction
- Tooth loss



What does it have to do with heart disease?

A 2002 study in the *Journal of Periodontology* found that people with periodontal disease are at a **greater risk** for systemic diseases including cardiovascular disease. Because gum disease is a bacterial infection, this oral bacteria can enter the bloodstream and travel to other major organs, such as the heart, causing harm and creating new infections.



In the study, researchers found that the patients with severe periodontal disease had approximately **four times**

more harmful bacterial products in their blood than those with moderate or no periodontal disease.

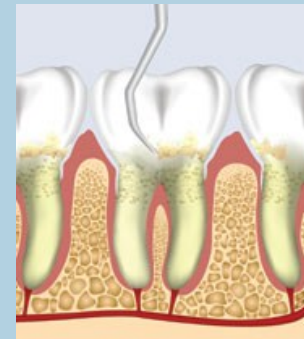
In July 2009, The American Journal of Cardiology and Journal of Periodontology Editors' Consensus report acknowledged that **untreated periodontitis increases the systemic inflammatory burden and may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.**

The connection is the underlying inflammatory mechanism of periodontal disease. Recommendations included that the cardiologist perform a visual exam for signs of inflammation and the periodontist review the patient's health and family history of cardiovascular disease.

Taking care of your oral health is one important step **you** can take toward the prevention and control of heart disease.

Treatment and maintenance

In the **early stages** of gum disease, treatment typically involves scaling and root planing, a **non-surgical procedure** to thoroughly clean teeth above and below the gum line to remove plaque and calculus.



Scaling and root planing procedure

More advanced cases may require further treatment. Dr. Cook will assess your oral hygiene and stage of disease to determine the best treatment plan for you. She and your cardiologist will work together to keep both your heart and mouth healthy.

The goal is to help you control the inflammatory challenges of periodontal disease.