

Periodontal Disease in Adolescents

The meaning of the word "periodontal" is around the tooth. Also known as gum diseases periodontal diseases are nothing but serious infections caused by bacteria that harm the gums and tissues in the vicinity of the mouth. While dental cavities or caries only affects the tooth Periodontal disease is devastating affecting the bones that surround the tooth, gums, coverings of teeth root and tooth membrane. A physician specializing in the treatment of periodontal disease is known as Periodontist.

The disease should not be taken lightly and if it's left untreated it can spread and affect the bones under the teeth which would eventually dissolve and would not longer support the teeth in its place. The chronic form of the disease is responsible for tooth loss in seventy percent of the cases affecting seventy five percent of the people at some time in their lives.

The causes of periodontal disease are similar to any other oral disease wherein plaque buildup and bacteria are responsible for the condition. According to statistics plaque buildup is the main cause of gum related diseases. Apart from the causes listed, the other possible causes of periodontal disease include: Genetics, unkempt oral hygiene, food getting stuck to frequently in the gums, mouth breathing, low nutrient diet or vitamin c deficient diet, smoking, diabetes, autoimmune/systemic disease, changes in hormone levels, certain medications and constantly teeth grinding.

According to statistics nearly sixty six percent young adult population suffers from periodontal disease and nearly fifty percent of teenagers suffer from periodontal disease. Also, it is the most widespread tooth loss cause in adults. But, what are the symptoms of periodontal disease? There are various symptoms and it could differ from one adolescent to the other which may include swollen, tender, and red gums; if one gets bleeding during brushing or flossing the teeth it is also one of the symptoms of periodontal disease; receding gums; constant odorous breath; loose teeth; dentures not fitting any longer; change in alignment of jaw and bite. The symptoms of the disease may be similar to other medical conditions and doctor's consultation is the best in this regard.

Periodontal disease can be diagnosed by a dentist or a periodontist after reviewing the complete medical history and also physical examination of the teenager's mouth. Usually x-ray of the teeth is taken to evaluate the disease. Periodontal disease is classified into different types based on what stage the disease is in. The mildest form of gum disease is known as "gingivitis" in which gums become swollen, red and tender resulting in bleeding while daily brushing and flossing. Gingivitis is again divided into 4 groups primarily acute, sub-

acute, recurrent and chronic. Acute gingivitis is nothing but sudden appearance which lasts for shorter duration and could be painful. Sub-acute gingivitis is less severe type of gingivitis. Recurrent gingivitis is the one that comes back after treatment. Chronic gingivitis is the one that onsets slowly, lasts longer and is generally painless. A dentist's treatment and proper and continuous care can easily solve the problem of gingivitis but if left untreated could result in periodontitis.

Periodontitis is further classified into mild and moderate to advance. Periodontitis results from untreated gingivitis. In this stage the deterioration of the bone in the vicinity of the tooth becomes evident. The common symptoms include red gums that bleed; mouth tastes bad; loose teeth; tooth loss. Proper treatment is a must to control the disease and prevent further deterioration. Periodontitis which is in moderate to advanced stage shows signs of major loss of tissue and bone loss near the teeth.

There are various treatments available for periodontal disease which is decided by the dentist depending on teenager's age, medical history and health in general. The method of treatment also depends on the extent to which disease has reached. The tolerance of the teenager to certain medicines, therapies and procedures are also taken into consideration. Expectations and opinion of the parents or teenager is also the criteria in deciding the type of treatment. The treatment usually involves plaque removal, medication and in worse cases a surgery.

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