

# Diagnosing Periodontal Disease

## What is periodontal disease?

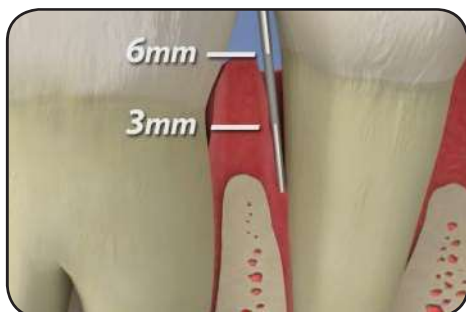
Periodontal disease is a serious infection and the number one reason adults lose teeth. As periodontal disease advances, the infection can destroy the ligaments and bone that support your teeth.

## What are the symptoms?

If you have periodontal disease—

- ❖ your gums may bleed when you brush or floss.
- ❖ your gums may be soft, swollen, or tender.
- ❖ your gums may start to pull away from your teeth.
- ❖ your teeth may become loose.
- ❖ you may have persistent bad breath.

It is also possible to have no noticeable symptoms. In fact, most people who have periodontal disease are not even aware of it



*Perio probe*



*Plaque is difficult to see*



*Periodontal disease*

## What causes periodontal disease?

The main cause of periodontal disease is the long term build-up of plaque, the sticky, colorless film of food and bacteria that constantly forms on your teeth.

It is hard to see plaque, but plaque can clearly be seen after it is stained with a disclosing tablet. When plaque stays on your teeth for two or three days, it hardens into calculus, or tartar.

The bacteria in plaque invade the spaces between your teeth and gums and produce toxins. These toxins, combined with your body's reaction to them, destroy the bone around your teeth. And once lost, bone never grows back on its own.

If there is not enough support for the teeth and they become loose, they might have to be removed.

## Diagnosis and treatment

To determine if you have periodontal disease, we perform a thorough examination which includes taking x-rays to determine how much bone has been lost.

We measure the depth of the sulcus (a tiny groove between the tooth and gum) with a probe. A reading of more than 3 millimeters could be a sign of periodontal disease, and we pay careful attention to those areas.

If we find periodontal disease, we discuss your treatment options and proper homecare. We want to help you maintain the health of your teeth, gums and bone and restore your healthy smile.