

Why is gum disease such a big deal?

As more research is published, we recognize that the mouth is a portal of entry for many infections that affect overall health. Gum disease, or periodontal disease, is one of the oral infections that pose the greatest risk to your overall health. Here are a few things you should know:

- Gum disease is the leading cause of tooth loss.
- Gum disease is common, widespread, and affects nearly everyone at some point in their life span.
- Gum disease is usually not painful until the severe stage.
- Gum disease can be passed from parents to children, and between couples.
- When your gums bleed, a path for bacteria and their toxins is created and they enter your blood stream.
- When gum disease is left untreated, harmful bacteria can travel from infected gums to other organs throughout your body.



Gum disease causes inflammation throughout your whole body. This increases your risk for life threatening diseases and conditions such as heart disease and stroke, pneumonia, and complications of diabetes and pregnancy, among many other things.

As a non-dental healthcare provider, I am not trained to diagnose gum disease. However, based on your answers to the screening questions (on the other side), I highly recommend you call your dentist's or dental hygienist's office to schedule a consultation and be examined for periodontal disease. If you do not currently have a dentist, I would like to refer you to the dental office listed below.

Dentist's or Dental Hygienist's Information

REQUEST FOR CONSULT FOR PERIODONTAL DISEASE EXAMINATION

Patient Name: _____ , _____
(Last) (First)

Gender: Male Female Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____
(Month) (Day) (Year)

This patient is being referred for a periodontal examination because he/she:

- Has poorly controlled diabetes
- Has cardiovascular disease
- Has chronic kidney disease or is undergoing dialysis
- Is pregnant
- Is undergoing a joint replacement or solid organ transplant
- Has peripheral artery disease
- Has rheumatoid arthritis
- Has recurring respiratory infections
- Has osteoporosis
- Is taking medications that may increase the risk for periodontal disease
- Has HIV, AIDS, or another immunocompromised condition
- Is undergoing treatment for cancer
- Other _____

This patient screens positive for the following risk factors and/or signs and symptoms of periodontal disease:

- Patient uses tobacco
- Patient has a family history of periodontal disease (first degree relatives)
- Patient has chronic stress and/or depression
- Patient is overweight (BMI 25 Kg/m² or greater)
- Patient has:
 - Bleeding gums during toothbrushing
 - Red, swollen or tender gums
 - Gums that have pulled away from the teeth
 - Persistent bad breath
 - Pus between the teeth and gums
 - Loose or separating teeth
 - Changes in the way teeth fit together
 - Food catching between teeth

Physician's or other healthcare practitioner's name: _____

Phone number of referring healthcare provider: _____

Signature _____ ; Date _____