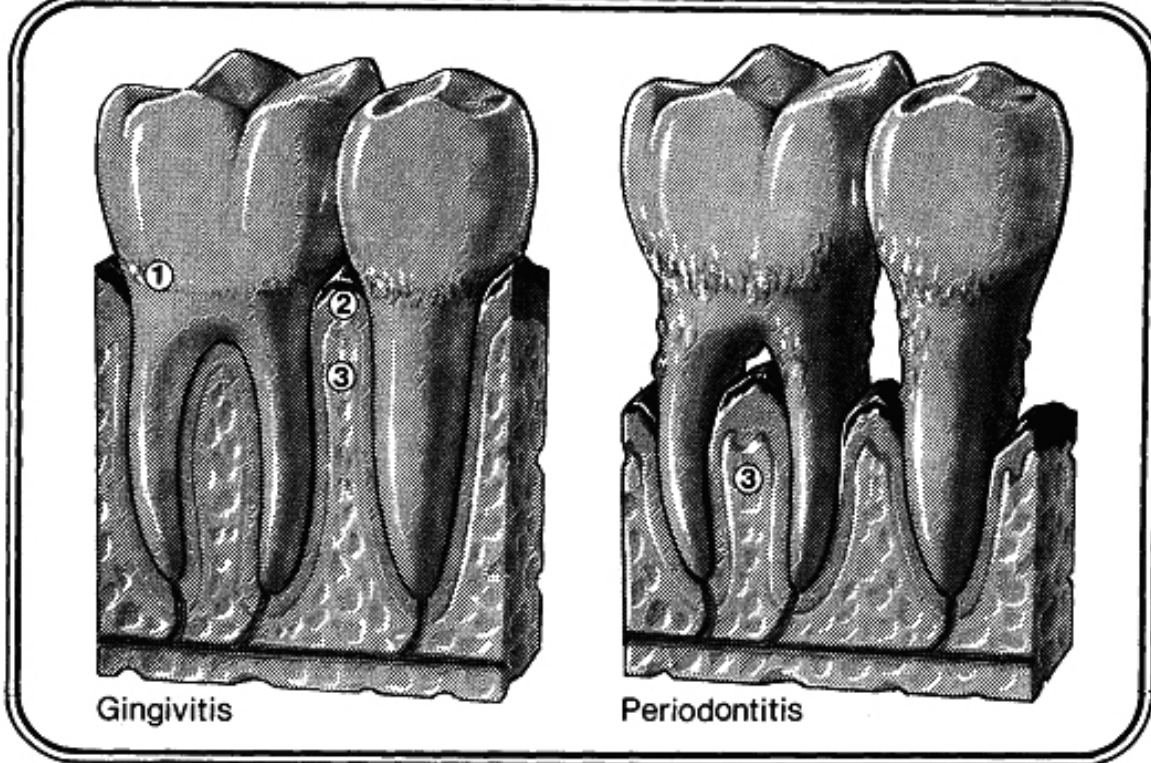


PERIODONTAL DISEASE

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

D8

Periodontal Disease



Periodontal disease is the most common cause of tooth loss in adults. The word “periodontal” means around the tooth. “Periodontal disease” refers to a bacterial disease that results in the destruction of the soft tissue (gums) and underlying bone around the teeth.

Periodontal disease begins when the bacteria in plaque, a sticky white film, accumulates on your teeth. Your saliva will calcify the plaque that is not removed by proper daily home care. This crusty, calcified plaque is called calculus also known as tartar. Calculus accumulates at or below the gum line, making home care less effective. Calculus can only be removed by your Dentist or Hygienist with a cleaning. If not removed regularly, inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) will take place. Signs of gingivitis are puffy, red, irritated gums that will be sore and bleed during normal brushing and flossing. If allowed to continue, this will progress to involve the underlying bone that supports the teeth, causing loss of the bone. In advanced periodontal disease (periodontitis), the loss of bone due to the infection is irreversible and involved teeth may require removal. Periodontal disease is common because it is relatively painless early on, and you cannot easily detect loss of bone taking place yourself.

Periodontal disease risk can be lowered with proper home care and regular dental checkups and professional care.

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