



# SEE YOUR DENTIST

## Periodontal Disease: What You Should Know

(NAPSA)—Healthy gums are the key to better health for everyone; however, 50 million Americans currently suffer from gum disease (periodontal disease). Left untreated, gum disease may serve as a gateway to many other medical conditions. The good news is that when it is caught early, periodontal disease is reversible. And, now there are more ways than ever to treat it.

Even though it is the second most prevalent disease in the U.S.—affecting nearly one out of every four Americans—many people are unaware that periodontal disease and gum disease are different names for the same condition.

At present, nearly 75 percent of people over age 35 have some stage of gum disease according to the American Dental Hygienists' Association. Unfortunately, less than one-fifth of those with the condition seek treatment. The first-ever Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health in America suggests that there are strong associations between oral infections—primarily periodontal infections—and other more serious diseases. This potential connection between gum disease and serious conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and low birth rate babies is sobering news.

Gum disease is a serious chronic bacterial infection that attacks and destroys the gums and bones that hold your teeth in place. The infection occurs when dental plaque, a sticky, sometimes colorless film, accumulates on the surfaces of the teeth.

In the early stage of periodontal disease the gums can become red, swollen and bleed easily. At this stage, the disease is reversible and can be eliminated through routine dental cleanings and daily brushing and flossing.

If left untreated, gingivitis can progress to periodontitis when the plaque spreads below the gum line. Toxins in the bacteria can destroy the bone and gum that surround the teeth creating pockets for bacteria to accumulate. As the pockets become deeper, more

### How to Maintain Oral Health and Arrest Gum Disease

- Take care of your teeth and gums with regular brushing and flossing.
- Visit the dentist twice a year for regular exams and request annual periodontal disease screenings.
- Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol intake.
- Maintain a healthy diet.
- Limit or reduce stress on a regular basis.
- Know your family's oral health history.



**Oral health problems currently cause employed adults to lose more than 164 million hours of work each year.**

**Source: U.S. Surgeon General's 2000 Report on Oral Health**

room is created for bacteria to grow. Eventually, these bacteria enter the blood stream potentially leading to more serious health conditions.

Because periodontal disease is a chronic bacterial infection, it can be treated with an antibiotic. Typical treatment for periodontal disease includes scaling and root planing, also known as SRP. This non-surgical procedure involves deep cleaning above and below the gum line to remove plaque that has built up.

Recently, dentists and hygienists have begun adding the antibiotic ARESTIN™, a locally administered antibiotic to help fight periodontal disease, to the SRP procedure. The antibiotic is applied directly to the infected area, helping eliminate the remaining bacteria that can't be reached during the SRP procedure. ARESTIN is a fast and easy treatment that is comfortable for patients, anesthesia is not needed.

Interestingly, in a recent survey of 1,000 Americans, over half rated regular dental visits and teeth cleanings higher than getting regular cholesterol checks. However, far fewer request a dental screening that could predict their chances of contracting periodontal disease.

For additional information on periodontal disease, visit **www.arestin.com** or call **1-866-ARESTN4 (1-866-273-7864)**.

**Note to Editors:** ARESTIN is indicated as an adjunctive therapy to scaling and root planing (SRP) procedures for reduction of pocket depth in patients with adult periodontitis. ARESTIN contains minocycline, a tetracycline derivative, and therefore should not be used in children and in pregnant or nursing women. The use of drugs of the tetracycline class during tooth development may cause permanent discoloration of the teeth. The most common treatment-emergent adverse events were headache (9.0 percent), infection (7.6 percent), flu syndrome (5.0 percent), and pain (4.3 percent). These occurred at a similar rate to SRP and SRP and placebo.