

Dental Health



Study Takes A Bite Out Of Periodontal Disease

(NAPSA)—Periodontal disease is a chronic inflammatory disease that affects the gum tissue and bone supporting the teeth, according to the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP).

It's a very common chronic disease, can lead to tooth loss and is associated with several other chronic inflammatory diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. A new study shows half of Americans are living with a periodontal disease and don't know it. The good news is that regular dental examinations are an effective way to catch and treat periodontal disease early.

A Common Disease

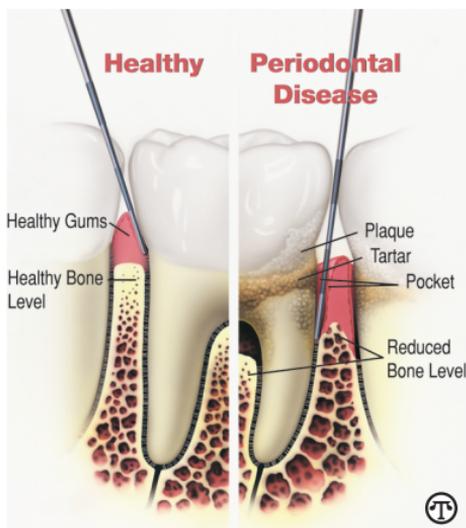
The study, published in the *Journal of Dental Research*, found that one out of every two American adults aged 30 and over has periodontal disease. In adults over age 65, prevalence estimates increase to just over 70 percent.

The findings of the study are based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) most recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). It's designed to assess the health and nutritional status of adults and children in the United States.

This edition of the NHANES has been described as the most comprehensive survey of periodontal health ever conducted in the U.S. The AAP has worked closely with the CDC since 2003 on periodontal disease surveillance.

A Precise Measure

Said Pamela McClain, DDS, president of the AAP and a practicing periodontist, "For the first time, we now have a precise mea-



Experts say a comprehensive periodontal evaluation from your dental professional every year can help diagnose and treat periodontal disease early.

sure of the prevalence of periodontal disease, and can better understand the true severity and extent of periodontal disease in our country.”

Dr. McClain noted that these findings support the need for comprehensive periodontal evaluations annually. “To really know if you have periodontal disease, a dental professional must examine each tooth and below the gum line. A visual examination alone, even by the most qualified dentist, is not enough.”

She believes that these findings from the CDC suggest that it is more important than ever to receive a comprehensive periodontal evaluation from your dental professional every year.

To assess your risk for periodontal disease and learn more, visit www.perio.org.