

## Periodontal Disease

### What is it?

Periodontal disease, also known as periodontitis, is a serious ongoing bacterial infection that can irreversibly damage the gums, bones, and other supporting structures of the teeth, and can lead to tooth loss. Periodontal disease begins as a mild gum disease known as gingivitis. With gingivitis, the affected gum areas become increasingly red. They may appear swollen and bleed easily, especially when you brush or floss your teeth. The condition is reversible at this stage with regular brushing, flossing, and visits to the dentist. If it is not treated, however, gingivitis may lead to a more serious condition called periodontitis. At advanced stages, periodontal disease may require more complex treatments to prevent tooth loss. How periodontal disease is treated often depends on how far the condition has progressed, and how well your body responds to therapy over time.



Periodontal disease is the leading cause of all adult tooth loss. More importantly, research has associated periodontal disease with several serious medical problems, including; heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

Periodontal disease is common but largely preventable. It is usually the result of poor oral hygiene. Brushing at least twice a day, flossing daily and getting regular dental checkups can greatly reduce your chance of developing periodontal disease.

Whether your periodontal disease is stopped, slowed, or gets worse depends a great deal on how well you care for your teeth, including visits to the dentist from this point forward.

### Can Periodontal Disease cause health problems beyond the mouth?

In some studies, researchers have observed that people with periodontal disease were more likely to develop heart disease or have difficulty controlling blood sugar. Other studies showed that women with periodontal disease were more likely than those with healthy gums to deliver preterm, low birth weight babies.

### What Causes Periodontal Disease?

It is thought that periodontitis begins with plaque, a sticky film composed mainly of bacteria. Plaque forms on your teeth when starches and sugars in food interact with bacteria normally found in your mouth. Brushing and flossing your teeth removes plaque. But plaque re-forms, usually within 24 hours. Plaque that stays on your teeth longer than two or three days can harden under your gumline into tartar (calculus). Tartar also may form as a result of the mineral content of your saliva. Tartar makes plaque more difficult to remove and acts as a reservoir for bacteria. You can't get rid of tartar by brushing and flossing; you need a professional dental cleaning.

Ongoing inflammation eventually causes pockets to develop between your gums and teeth that fill with plaque, tartar and bacteria. In time, these pockets become deeper and more bacteria accumulate, eventually advancing under your gum tissue. These deep infections cause a loss of tissue and bone. If too much bone is destroyed, you may some teeth.

### What can increase your risk of Periodontal Disease?

People usually don't show signs of periodontal disease until they are in their 30s or 40s. Men are more likely to have periodontal disease than women. Although teenagers rarely develop periodontitis, they can develop gingivitis, the initial stage of periodontitis. Most commonly, periodontitis develops when plaque is allowed to build up along and under the gum line, tobacco use, and hormonal changes in women during pregnancy or menopause. People with diabetes are at higher risk for developing infections, including periodontal disease; Other illnesses and their treatments, such as HIV/AIDS can also negatively affect the health of the gum, as can treatments for cancer.

### What are the indications of Periodontal Disease?

Periodontal disease is usually painless until it reaches an advanced stage. However, there are some indications of its presence including: red swollen gums;

bright red or purplish gums; gums that feel tender when touched; gums that bleed easily; gums that recede from the teeth; new spaces developing between your teeth; pus between your teeth and gums; bad breath that would not go away; loose teeth; and a change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite.

If you notice any of the above warning signs, please contact our office for a periodontal examination. The sooner you seek care, the better your chances of reversing damage from periodontitis, and potentially preventing other serious health problems.

### How is Periodontal Disease diagnosed?

If you schedule regular dental checkups, your dentist can detect developing periodontal diseases before the gums and the bones supporting your teeth are irreversibly damaged. Diagnosis of periodontitis is generally simple. When periodontal disease is present, the normally shallow sulcus develops into a deeper pocket that bleeds, collects more plaque bacteria and is difficult to keep clean.



*These are the initial stages of periodontal disease.*

Dental x-rays may be taken to evaluate the condition of bone supporting the teeth and to detect other problems not visible during the clinical examination.

### Can Periodontal Disease be prevented?

Prevention is your first line of defense. The best way to prevent periodontitis is to follow a program of good oral hygiene, one that you practice consistently throughout life. Brush your teeth at least twice daily with fluoride toothpaste. Floss at least once a day. Flossing before you brush allows you to clean away the loosened food particles and bacteria. Do not smoke.

More importantly, see your dentist routinely for checkup and professional cleaning, usually every 6 months. Our staff will provide additional instructions and recommend oral hygiene products to use at home.

**Now You Know:** Dental checkups and professional cleaning are important measures to prevent periodontal disease. If these measures are not taken, the likelihood of disease increases. In some cases, even with these measures, a certain percentage of patients experience some form of periodontal disease that must be treated. See your Dentist. ■

## AFRICAN RECIPE CORNER

### WAAKYE

*WAAKYE is a popular Ghanaian street food It is usually served for breakfast or lunch with a typical Ghanaian spicy pepper sauce (Shitto). It can be eaten with boiled eggs and/or stew of fish, chicken, beef or vegetables. The dish requires about 15 minutes of preparation and an hour and a half of cooking time.*

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups rice
- 1 cup red beans or black-eyed peas
- 4 dry sorghum leaves (or 1 teaspoon of baking soda)
- Salt to taste
- 10 cups water

#### Preparation

1. Wash and soak the beans in water for 3–4 hours.
2. Drain the beans and place them in a large pot of water.
3. Bring to boil and let it cook for about 45 minutes.
4. Wash and cut sorghum leaves 3 to 4 inches; toss in with the boiling beans for 5 minutes and remove. (You can substitute leaves with baking soda to give the Waayke its characteristic colour.)
5. Wash and add the rice to the beans in the pot, along with more water.
6. Season with salt.
7. Allow to cook for 15–20 minutes (or until the beans and rice are tender, and water has been totally absorbed). Stir while it cooks, to avoid burning.
8. Serve the dish with pepper sauce and boiled egg and/or a stew of fish, chicken, beef, or vegetables.



*Serves 4. Enjoy! Recipe Courtesy of Mrs. Eugenia Manful, GRA Head Office, Accra-Ghana*



# BETHEL FEATURES & CONVENIENCES

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We have invested in technology and procedures that ensure that we take the pain out of dentistry and make your visit to our clinic a pleasant experience.

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We provide personalized treatment plans and give you treatment options. We can also give you a quotation and a medical report to support any recommended procedure before it is done.

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Digital X-ray is a fast, comfortable, precise and safe way of looking into your mouth. We have them next to each dental chair in our clinic so you do not have to walk out of our office to have an X-ray.

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On any week day, our doors are open from 7.00 am to 7.00pm.  
On Saturdays, we open if there is an appointment.

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Laser technology is often gentler on teeth and gum so anesthesia may not be required.



# Congratulations!



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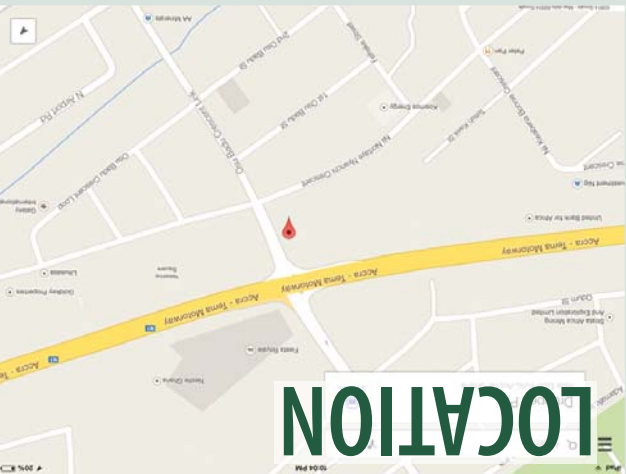
- Floss and floss picks
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- Toothbrushes
- Mouthwash (wide variety)
- Toothpaste (kids & adults)



## BETHEL IN PICTURES

## THE DENTAL SUPPLY SHOP

Directions: Dzorwulu Junction, Off N1 Highway,  
Across from Fiesta Royale Hotel. (Within Omni Clinic compound)



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