

## **Periodontal Disease**

- Periodontal disease, also known as gum disease, is an infection that attacks the bone and gums that support your teeth. It is the most common cause of tooth loss in adults.
- Bacteria in your mouth, called plaque, are the major cause of periodontal disease. Other things — such as the general condition of your teeth, your nutrition and general health, habits and emotional stress — can contribute to periodontal disease.
- If bacteria are not removed regularly by brushing and flossing, plaque can harden into tartar (also called calculus). The rough surface of this tartar will help more bacteria to stay close to your teeth and under the gumline.
- This bacteria make products that can harm your gums and the bone around your teeth.
- Periodontal disease is painless and, in the early stages, it is difficult to detect. Common early warning signs may include bad breath and tender or swollen gums that bleed when you brush and floss your teeth.
- Periodontal disease can be prevented with proper dental care, started at an early age, that includes brushing, flossing and regular dental visits. Caught in the early stages, periodontal disease is easy to treat.

**You can keep your teeth and mouth healthy for a lifetime! Ask your dental hygienist and dentist to evaluate the health of your gums.**

**For more information, contact**

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NOTE: This fact sheet was derived from one previously published by the Arizona Department of Health Services.