



Barry W. Heaton, D.D.S.

*Diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology
Practice Limited to Periodontics & Dental Implants*

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Dear Valued Patient,

Fallacies About Gum Disease

FALLACY: Tooth loss is a natural part of aging

FACT: With good oral hygiene and regular professional care, your teeth are meant to last a lifetime. However, if left untreated, periodontal (gum) disease can lead to tooth loss. It is the primary cause of tooth loss in adults 35 and over.

FALLACY: People who have gum disease are "dirty" and don't brush their teeth.

FACT: Research proves that up to 30% of the population may be genetically susceptible to gum disease. Despite aggressive oral care habits, these people may be six times more likely to develop periodontal disease. Identifying these people with a genetic test before they even show signs of the disease and getting them into early treatment may help them keep their teeth for a lifetime.

FALLACY: Gum disease doesn't affect overall health.

FACT: Emerging research links periodontal disease to other health problems including heart and respiratory diseases; preterm, low birthweight babies; stroke; osteoporosis; and diabetes.

FALLACY: Gum disease is a minor infection.

FACT: The mass of tissue in the oral cavity is equivalent to the skin on your arm that extends from the wrist to the elbow. If this area was red, swollen, and infected, you would visit the doctor. Gum disease is not a small infection. Its result, tooth loss, leads to a very different lifestyle—dentures. The changes in your appearance, breath, and ability to chew food are dramatic.

FALLACY: Bleeding gums are normal.

FACT: Bleeding gums are one of nine warning signs of gum disease. Think of gum tissue as the skin on your hand. If your hands bled every time you washed them, you would know something is wrong. Other signs of gum disease include: red, swollen or tender gums; sores in your mouth; gums that have pulled away from the teeth; persistent bad breath; pus between the teeth and gums (leaving bad breath); loose or separating teeth; a change in the way the teeth fit together; and a change in the fit of partials and dentures.

