



# 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 Patients,

## **Brush and Floss Your Way to Overall Health**

*Maintaining healthy teeth and gums can contribute to more than just oral health*

Most people know that in order to live a healthy lifestyle, you must eat a balanced diet, get plenty of exercise, and avoid tobacco products. What many people don't realize is that tooth brushing and flossing are just as important in helping to maintain overall health.

Routine oral care is the best way to prevent periodontal disease. Since research has linked gum disease to several other diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis, maintaining periodontal health is more important than ever.

Periodontal disease is a chronic inflammatory condition that affects not only the gums, but also the bone supporting the teeth. "If left untreated, it destroys the supporting bone and tissues that hold the teeth in the mouth. Periodontal disease is the leading cause of tooth loss in adults." Periodontal disease can affect the entire mouth or one or more teeth and is even capable of recurring in the same patient.

The American Academy of Periodontology estimates that eight out of ten Americans suffer from some form of periodontal disease. "Because periodontal disease develops silently and painlessly, most people don't even know they have it, until it becomes advanced. Research has suggested that periodontal disease is connected to a variety of other systemic diseases, so it is crucial that treatment of gum disease be sought as soon as possible."

There are several major signs that may signal periodontal disease. If you or someone you know notice any of these symptoms, it is important to have it evaluated by Dr. Heaton:

- Gums that bleed easily during brushing or flossing.
- Red, swollen or tender gums.
- Gums that have pulled away from the teeth.
- Persistent bad breath.
- Loose or separating teeth.
- A change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite.

While poor oral hygiene is a major cause of periodontal disease, there are a variety of other risk factors that can affect gum health. These include genetics, tobacco use, hormonal changes, stress, certain medications, poor nutrition, and the presence of other inflammatory diseases such as diabetes.

The American Dental Association recommends comprehensive daily oral care, including regular brushing and flossing, and consistent routine visits to the dentist to avoid gum disease. If gum disease develops, a consultation with Dr. Heaton can lead to effective treatment.

For more information on preventing periodontal disease, or to determine if you are at risk, visit [perio.org](http://perio.org).

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We appreciate our patients who refer us to family or friends. Make a referral and receive a complimentary exam at your next oral health periodontal maintenance appointment!

If you are due for your next oral health periodontal maintenance appointment, please call to get the date and time you prefer. Your health is very important to us and we look forward to seeing you soon.



Here is a map to our office which is conveniently located in :  
Houston  
(Westheimer and Fountain View)  
This location provides easy-access and free parking.