

Relationship Between Obesity & Periodontal Disease In Young Adults

Periodontal Disease Is An Infection

Periodontal Disease is an ongoing infection deep in the gums and bone around your teeth. It is the leading cause of bad breath, tooth loss, and dentures in older adults.

More Periodontitis Found In Young Adults

“Periodontitis has long been considered an “old person’s disease, as more than half of people aged 55 or older have it. We now know that widespread risk factors, such as obesity, may also compromise periodontal health in younger populations,” said researcher Mohammad S. Al-Zahrani, D.M.D. of Case Western Reserve Univ.

Large US Study Measures Periodontal Disease & Obesity

The May issue of the Journal of Periodontology published a study of 13,665 people who were given a periodontal examination and body fat content measurements (body mass index, BMI, and waist circumference). The population cross section was divided into three groups: young adults (age 18-34), middle aged adults (age 35-59) and older (age 60+).

The Findings: Obese Young Adults – 76% Higher

Obesity is defined as excessively high weight when compared to a person’s ideal weight.

There was no significant association between body weight and periodontal disease in the middle and older age groups.

However, periodontal disease among obese young adults (18-34) was 76% higher than normal weight individuals in the same age group.

Possible Causes

Periodontal disease occurs more often in people who have lower Calcium or Vitamin C in their diets. Research into the dietary trends of young people has revealed significant decreases in raw fruit and non-potato vegetables, which are sources of Vitamin C. Adolescents also have decreased Calcium intake with an increase in soft drinks and non-citrus juices.

Another possible explanation is that obese young adults may experience chronic stress because of their condition. Chronic stress increases risk of periodontal disease.

“Like obesity, periodontal disease can take away a person’s confidence and smile. This is one more finding that shows healthy nutrition and adequate physical activity are necessary for overall health and may also help to improve periodontal health...” said Gordon Douglass, D.D.S. and President of the American Academy of Periodontology.

References

- 1) Mohammad S. Al-Zahrani, Nabil F. Bissada and Elaine A. Borawski – Obesity and Periodontal Disease in Young, Middle-aged and Older Adults Journal of Periodontology – May 2003

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