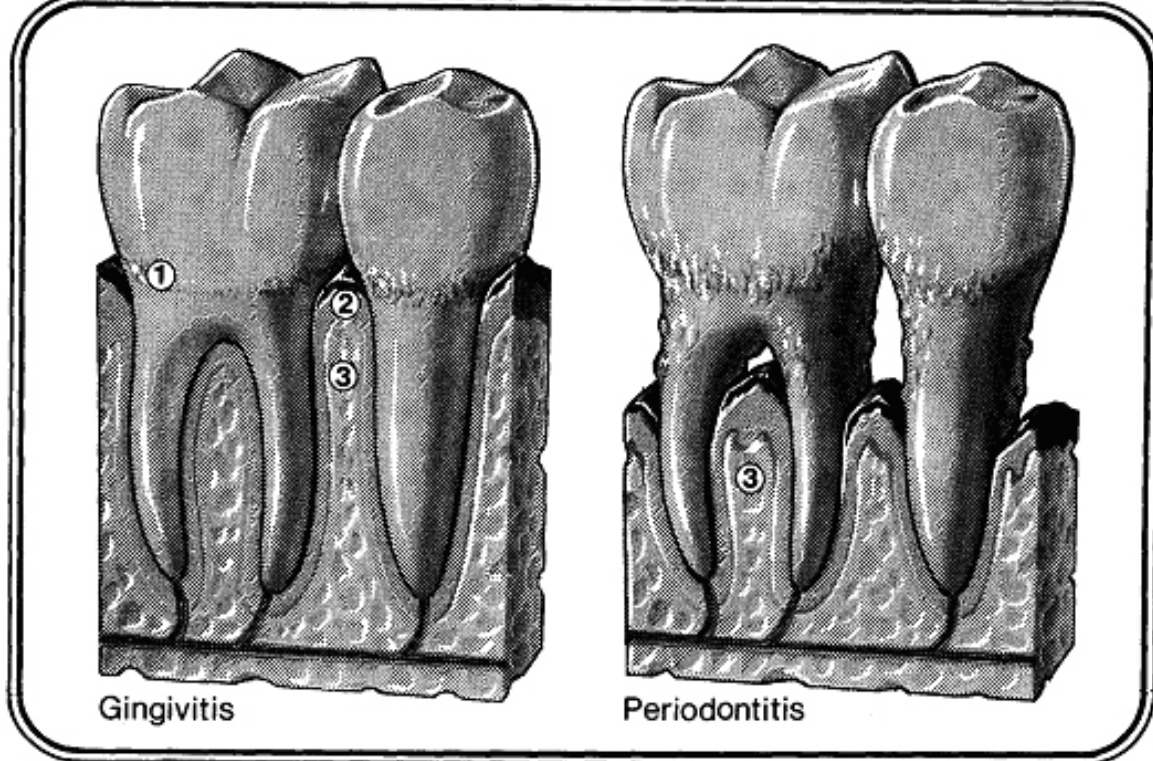


PERIODONTAL DISEASE

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

D8

Periodontal Disease



Periodontal disease (commonly known as pyorrhea) is the most common cause of loss of teeth as a person ages. The word “periodontal” means “around the tooth”. “Periodontal disease” refers to a deterioration of the soft tissue (gums) and bone around the teeth.

Periodontal disease begins when plaque (1) (a sticky white film) accumulates on your teeth. Your saliva will calcify the plaque if it is not removed by proper home care. This calcified plaque is called tartar or calculus. Tartar generally accumulates at the gum line. Tartar can only be removed with a cleaning by your Dentist or Hygienist. An inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) will take place if the tartar is not regularly removed. This inflammation may first reveal itself as a mild gum irritation (2) with bleeding during brushing. However, the real damage is occurring in the underlying bone (3). The bone which supports the tooth is being resorbed away. In the advanced stage of periodontal disease (periodontitis), the tooth may become infected and require removal. Periodontal disease is common because you cannot actually see the underlying bone destruction taking place.

Periodontal disease is easily controlled and treated with proper home care and regular dental checkups and cleanings.

Student Health Center



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