

DID YOU KNOW...



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## Half of American's Suffer from Gum Disease!

One out of every two American adults aged 30 and over has periodontal disease, according to recent findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A study titled **Prevalence of Periodontitis in Adults in the United States: 2009 and 2010** recently published in the Journal of Dental Research estimated that 47.2 percent, or 64.7 million American adults, have some form of periodontitis, an advanced stage of gum-periodontal disease. In adults 65 and older, prevalence rates increase to 70.1 percent.

The findings also indicate disparities among certain segments of the U.S. population. Periodontal disease is higher in men than women (56.4 percent vs. 38.4 percent) and is highest in Mexican-Americans (66.7 percent) compared to other races. Other segments with high prevalence rates include current smokers (64.2 percent); those living below the federal poverty level (65.4 percent); and those with less than a high school education (66.9 percent).

According to Paul Eke, MPH, PhD, lead author and CDC epidemiologist, the findings may drive public health policy. "We have demonstrated a high burden of periodontal disease in the adult U.S. population, especially among adults 65 and older. Periodontal disease is associated with age. As people live longer and retain more of their natural teeth, periodontal disease will likely take on more prominence. Maintaining periodontal health is important to the overall health and well-being of our aging population. Our findings support a need for public health programs to improve the oral health of adults."

Dr. McClain, President of the American Academy of Periodontology noted that these findings support the need for comprehensive periodontal evaluations annually. "To really know if you have periodontal disease, a dental professional must examine each tooth above and below the gum line. A visual examination alone, even by the most qualified dentist, is not enough. These findings suggest that many more people have periodontal disease than previously thought, so it is more important than ever to receive a comprehensive periodontal evaluation from your dental professional every year."

