

AN OLD ADAGE SAYS THAT OLDER PEOPLE ARE "LONG IN THE TOOTH". WHILE IT'S AN INTERESTING CONCEPT, OUR TEETH DON'T GROW AS WE AGE. ACTUALLY, WHAT WE'RE NOTICING IS GUM DISEASE.

WHEN GUM LINES RECEDE, MORE OF THE TOOTH IS EXPOSED, GIVING THE ILLUSION OF GROWTH. THE EARLIEST STAGE OF GUM OR PERIODONTAL DISEASE IS GINGIVITIS. IT BEGINS WITH INFECTED GUM TISSUE. IF LEFT UNTREATED, IT COULD ADVANCE INTO BONE DAMAGE, PAIN AND POSSIBLE LOSS OF TEETH.

WARNING SIGNS OF GUM DISEASE ARE SWOLLEN GUMS, BLEEDING, OR PUS BETWEEN THE TEETH AND GUMS. FORTUNATELY, GUM DISEASE, CAN BE TREATED AND POSSIBLY PREVENTED.

PREVENTION CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS BRUSHING TWICE A DAY, FLOSSING OR USING AN INTERDENTAL CLEANER, EATING A BALANCED DIET, AND HAVING REGULAR PROFESSIONAL CLEANINGS.

IF YOU THINK YOUR GUMS ARE RECEDING, OR YOU ARE EXPERIENCING ANY OF THE WARNING SIGNS, BE SURE TO SEE YOUR DENTIST.

FOR THE ADA DENTAL MINUTE, I'M DR. MARIA LOPEZ HOWELL.