AAP PATIENT PAGE



Rheumatoid Arthritis

Swollen joints and missing teeth often go hand in hand

The American Academy of Periodontology encourages rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients not to brush off daily oral hygiene becasue you may have a greater risk of losing your teeth to periodontal disease, a bacterial infection of the gums.

A study published in the Journal of Periodontology found that people with RA were twice as likely to have periodontal disease with moderate to severe jawbone loss. In fact, they averaged 11.6 missing teeth versus 6.7 in the control group.

The joint connection between fluid) and cause inflammation. RA and periodontal disease is due to similar pathologies; abnormal cells invade and damage caused by the immune destroy cartilage and bone system and chronic inflammation within joints. Muscles, ligaments are central to both diseases.

inside their joints. White blood immune system travel to

the synovium (a thin, layer of cells that line joints and lubricating

In turn, periodontal infections cells that are part of the normal inflame the supporting tissues of the teeth and destroy attachment fibers and supporting bone that hold teeth into the mouth.

> At this point, researchers are produces not saying the relationship between the two diseases is causal. However, some scientists think bacterial infections may trigger the disease process in some of the estimated 2.1 million people with rheumatoid arthritis.

The Straight Facts: Patients with RA should continue daily brushing and

flossing and look for signs of periodontal disease, such as red, swollen gums that bleed easily.

The earlier you detect periodontal disease and treat it, the better off you are.

In RA, the immune system stabilize joints become weak and attacks a person's own cells unable to function normally. **Joints In Motion**

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For more information visit www.perio.org

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability, limiting daily activities for more than 7 million citizens. Because of its debilitating nature, the disease can take a tremendous toll on a person's life whereby they are physically unable to continue daily activities such as oral hygiene. The following tips will allow you to complete your daily oral hygiene routine with less pain and more mobility. P.S. They also make good gift ideas.

As RA progresses, these

and tendons that support and

Go Electric: Use electric toothbrushes and/or floss holders to reduce the amount of work that must be done by hand.

Grip It: Wrap toothbrush handles with a sponge hair roller or a PVC pipe to make a fatter, more comfortable grip.

Stay Wet: Speak to your dentist about ways to restore and maintain moisture in your mouth due to medications.

Handle with Care: Replace knob-type faucets handles with levers.

Pick it Out: Try water irrigators to remove food particles and plague between teeth.

Walk the Walk: Stick with your daily oral hygiene routine and see your dentist for regular checkups.

The American Academy of Periodontology Patient Page is a public service of the AAP and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of your personal periodontist. There may be variations in treatment that your periodontist will recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Call 1-800-FLOSS-EM for a free brochure on periodontal disease.