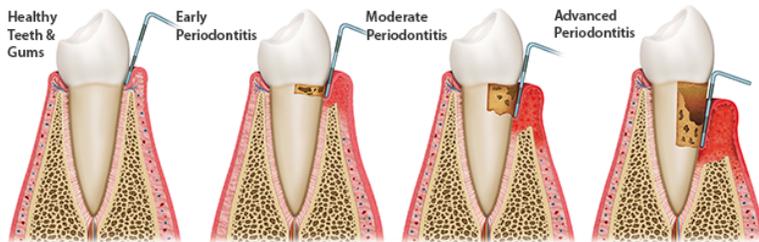




Gum Disease (Periodontitis)

Gum disease, or the clinical term periodontitis, is present in 75% of the adult population and can exist in varying stages. The presence of gum disease is determined during a routine periodontal examination, which includes a gentle probing of the areas between teeth and the gums, which dentistry calls "gum pockets" when measuring the depths of the pockets. The deeper the measurement, the more severe and advanced is the stage of the gum infection.

Healthy teeth and gums are indicated by a pocket depth of 1 to 3 millimeters, with no bleeding or sensitivity. Healthy gums appear pinkie in color and the gum tissue closely hugs the teeth.



Early on-set of gum disease, known as "Gingivitis" is indicated by pocket depths of 3 to 4 millimeters. Gingivitis is caused when bacteria start to multiply within the plaque that sticks to the tooth's surface and creeps into the pocket, causing red and slightly inflamed, infected gum tissue. If Gingivitis is left untreated, the condition may continue to advance to a more aggressive form of the disease. The symptoms become more visible, with tender, very swollen gums that bleed easily. The pockets can now reach 5 to 7 millimeters in depth.

In this more advanced stage "generalized chronic gum dis-

ease", the bacteria multiply and invade the swollen gum tissues and begin to destroy the bone that hold the teeth in place. Recommended treatment may include: scaling and root planning, a type of "Deep Cleaning" that goes below the gum line. A locally delivered antibiotic, such as Arestin, will be gently placed into the gum pocket that will continue to fight the infection and allow the gum tissue to heal.

Lastly, if no treatment is taken, the pockets will progress to 8-9 millimeters or more and further deterioration of the teeth and surround bone occurs. The teeth will become loose and roots will become exposed, the teeth will tend to spread creating open spaces, as

additional bone is lost. Just as serious and more important to overall health, the bacteria and their toxins will now invade the damaged blood vessels in the gum tissues and travel to vital organs in the body, such as the heart, liver, and can result in coronary attack or stroke and create other health care issues. Dentistry now understands that diabetic patients will improve their sugar control metabolism if they have healthy gums free from the bacteria and their toxins.

In all cases, gum disease is a treatable condition only if detected early on, and can be reversed with good patient home care and regulars periodic recall visits to the dentist. The more advanced forms of gum disease cannot be fully

Inside This Issue

Gum Disease	1
Provider Dispute Resolution	1
Credentials	2
Language Assistance Program	2
Encounter Data Submission	2
Reporting Inaccuracies	2

Provider Dispute Resolution Process

As previously notified, providers have the right to utilize the WDS dispute resolution process, which was developed to provide a fast, fair and cost-effective dispute resolution mechanism. WDS will not discriminate or retaliate against a provider (including, but now limited to, the cancellation of the provider's contract) because the provider filed a provider dispute. The dispute process is available at no cost to the provider.

For additional information regarding the provider dispute process, please contact the Provider Relations Department at **1-800-811-5111**.

reversed and treatment becomes very costly and time consuming. Your dentist will recommend the most effective course of treatment for your particular stage of gum infection.

Credentials

To ensure that your credentials are always current, don't forget to submit your renewed credentials to WDS prior to the expiration of the previous credentials. WDS must maintain copies of your current, valid California dental license, malpractice insurance cover page and DEA certificate in your provider file. Also, please remember to notify WDS Provider Relations whenever your office has a new associate dentist or dental specialist.

WDS is pleased to announce that in our continued efforts to make provider participation as simple as possible, WDS utilizes the services of Verifpoint, a credentialing organization with whom many of you may already be familiar due to your participation with other dental plans. Verifpoint will collect your credentials on behalf of WDS so that you do not have to provide duplicate information to WDS.

Encounter Data Submission

The California Knox-Keene Act requires all Dental HMOs to monitor plan enrollee utilization. The WDS Utilization Management (UM) Committee meets on a quarterly basis to review utilization trends to ensure that Plan enrollees are receiving services. WDS also uses the utilization data to develop new plans and review existing provider compensation for the managed care dental program.

Please submit your encounter data by the 10th day of the month for the previous month's encounters. To submit monthly encounter data, please use a standard ADA claim form.

Language Assistance Program

Many people who live in Western Dental's service area speak a language other than English. Even if they know some English, they may prefer to speak another language when discussing their dental health or dental plan benefit matters. Having a fully functioning Language Assistance Program ("LAP") in your office is a state requirement, effective January 1, 2009. Since that time, we have contacted our provider network seeking services in a foreign language to determine if your offices knew how to handle such requests. Thank you to all offices that have provided the proper language assistance. For those who did not know how, the phone call then changed into an instructional call so that your offices could properly handle such calls in the future. As a reminder, here are some of the most important facts:

- If you need assistance with a Western Dental member calling your office requesting services in another language, you may instruct the patient/member to contact the Member Services department at 1-800-992-3366, or you may call for them. Simply request to speak to someone who speaks the preferred language, and the Western Dental member service representative will make arrangements for an interpreter to join the call. Please allow time for connection to this service.
- Face-to-face interpreters in languages other than English (including Sign Language) may be available in some circumstance for special instructions. Western Dental Member Services department

at 1-800-992-3366 has more information available about this service.

- Vital Documents such as plan brochures, provider directories, important forms and letters about Western Dental services, language rights and certain outreach materials are produced in English and Spanish in accordance with LAP requirements. You may instruct your patients who need these documents in Spanish to call the plan to receive these materials.



As a reminder, the Language Assistance Program (LAP) bulletin is included with your rosters each month for reference. Additionally, we will be sending out a reminder card that you can post near your reception desk to make it easy for your office to contact Western Dental when language assistance is needed. And we will continue to make "secret shopper" calls to confirm that our providers understand and know how to use the LAP. If you need more information regarding LAP requirements for contracting dentists, please contact Provider Relations at 1-800-811-5111.

To Report a PROVIDER DIRECTORY Inaccuracy

In an effort to comply with State requirements for providing an accurate provider directory, Western Dental Services now offers several easy ways to report a potential provider directory inaccuracy. The regulation requires WDS to verify and confirm with all contracted providers that their information is current and up to date. Notifications will be sent to all contracted providers every six months and will require an affirmative response within 30 days acknowledging the notification was received and information about any applicable changes to the data on file. To report any provider directory inaccuracies contact Provider Relations at 1-800-811-5111, via email at ProviderDirectoryUpdate@westerndental.com or by using the online change form available on our website.

Please be on the lookout for a mailing that includes the current data WDS has on file for your office as well as a contract addendum and policies and procedures about the new state laws. These items are due back to WDS by June 15, 2016.