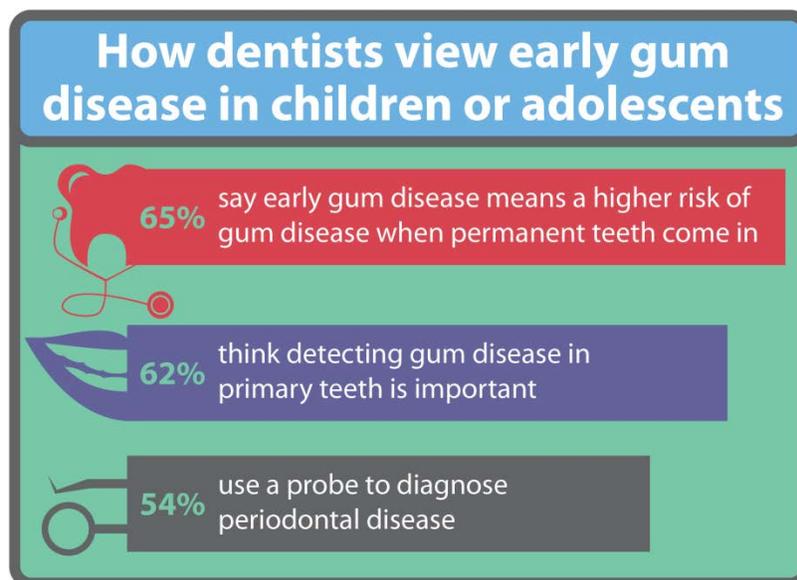


Quick Poll: Are You Probing For Periodontal Disease in Young Patients?

The prevalence of aggressive periodontal disease in children and young adults in the U.S. is around 1 to 2 percent,¹ studies show. Detecting the disease in its early stages is difficult. The Network is looking into whether to study the reliability of current approaches for diagnosing periodontal disease in kids. In the September 2016 Quick Poll, Network members were asked about their use of a periodontal probe to detect gum disease in children and young adults.



Of the 346 respondents, about 54 percent said they use a probe to diagnose gum disease in this age group. They said they use a probe starting at, on average, age 13, but the ages range from 5 to 21. Another 35 percent of respondents said they don't use a probe to look for gum disease in kids. Among respondents who didn't reply with either a yes or a no, many said it depends on patients' symptoms or x-ray results.

¹ Shaddox LM, Huang H, Lin T, Hou W, Harrison PL, Aukhil I, Walker CB, Klepac-Ceraj V, Paster BJ. Microbiological characterization in children with aggressive periodontitis. *Journal of Dental Research*. 2012; 91(10):927-933. Accessed at <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/GumDiseases/Periodontitis.htm>.



When asked if they thought it was important to detect gum disease in primary dentition, 62 percent of respondents said yes and 26 percent said no. Many commented that they weren't sure, they had never seen it, or they have only adult patients.

Almost 70 percent of respondents said that early gum disease means children have a greater susceptibility to gum disease in their permanent teeth, and 17 percent said it didn't. Others said they weren't sure or it depends on certain factors, such as the presence of chronic diseases like diabetes.

Less than half of the respondents (43 percent) were interested in participating in a study to evaluate the reliability of methods to diagnose periodontal disease in children and adolescents.