



# CDC: Half of American Adults Have Periodontal Disease

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**O**ne out of every two American adults aged 30 or older has periodontal disease, according to new 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,” estimates that 47.2%, or 64.7 million American adults, have mild, moderate, or severe periodontitis. In adults over age 65, prevalence rates increase to 70.1%. The study was published in August in the *Journal*

*of Dental Research*, the official publication of the International and American Associations for Dental Research.

The findings were collected as part of the CDC’s 2009–2010 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), a program of studies designed to assess the health and nutritional status of adults and children in the United States. The 2009–2010 survey included, for the first time, a full-mouth periodontal examination, making it the most comprehensive survey of oral health ever conducted in the United States. The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) has been

working closely with the CDC since 2003 to determine the extent, severity, and prevalence of periodontal disease in the United States.

“This is the most accurate picture of periodontal disease in the US adult population we have ever had,” said Pamela McClain, DDS, president of the American Academy of Periodontology and a practicing periodontist in Aurora, Colorado.

The data indicate prevalence disparities among certain segments of the US population. Periodontal disease is higher in men than women (56.4% vs. 38.4%) and is highest in Mexican-Americans

(66.7%) compared to other races. Other segments with high prevalence rates include current smokers (64.2%); those living below the federal poverty level (65.4%); and those with less than a high school education (66.9%).

The American Academy of Periodontology’s Comprehensive Periodontal Therapy Statement, published in the July 2011 issue of the *Journal of Periodontology*, outlines specific procedures that should be included in annual comprehensive periodontal evaluations to receive an accurate diagnosis, including both probing depth and attachment loss measurements.