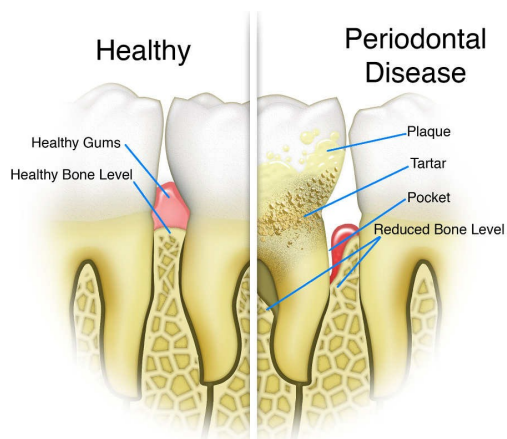


PERIODONTAL DISEASE AND TREATMENT OF GUM INFECTIONS

Periodontal disease is inflammation and infection of the gums, and is caused by dental plaque which builds up on the surface of the teeth. Plaque is a sticky film of bacteria which, if not cleaned thoroughly and often enough, can harden into calculus or tartar.

In its early stages the bacteria in plaque and calculus can cause gingivitis, which is inflammation of the gums. More advanced gum disease is known as periodontal disease, which causes serious damage to the gums and bone which support the teeth. Inflammation in the gums causes pockets and/or receding gums. Eventual loss of the bone supporting the teeth can cause teeth to become loose, fall out or require extraction.



SIGNS OF PERIODONTAL DISEASE

- red or bleeding gums
- tenderness or swelling of the gums
- bad breath
- bad taste in the mouth
- loose teeth
- drifting teeth with gaps appearing
- abscesses between teeth and gums

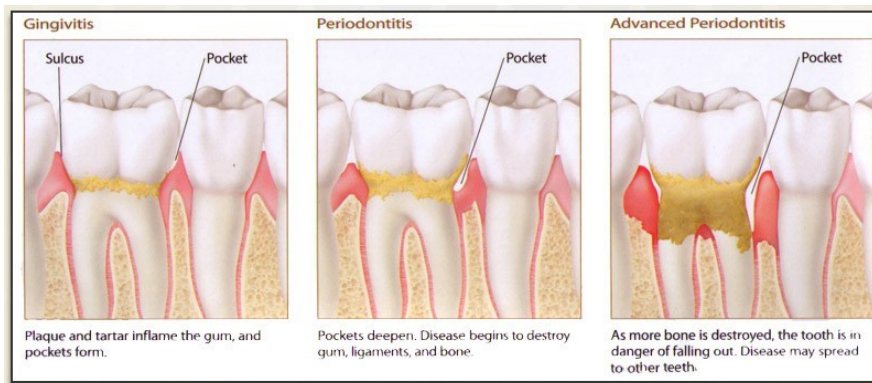
BENEFITS OF TREATMENT

The aim of treatment is to stop the progression of gum disease, increasing the chances of keeping your natural teeth for life. Your teeth will also look and feel cleaner and your mouth will be healthier. There is evidence that periodontal disease may be linked to other health problems.

DIAGNOSIS

At your routine check up, your dentist will check your teeth and gums for signs of gum disease by noting any calculus and plaque build up, recession, bleeding, and the presence of any gum pockets. Fillings are examined for any defects which may be contributing to gum disease.

X-rays may be necessary to check for bone loss around the teeth. Previous health problems may affect your treatment, and a full dental and medical history is necessary to determine which is the best treatment for you.



TREATMENT OF PERIODONTAL DISEASE

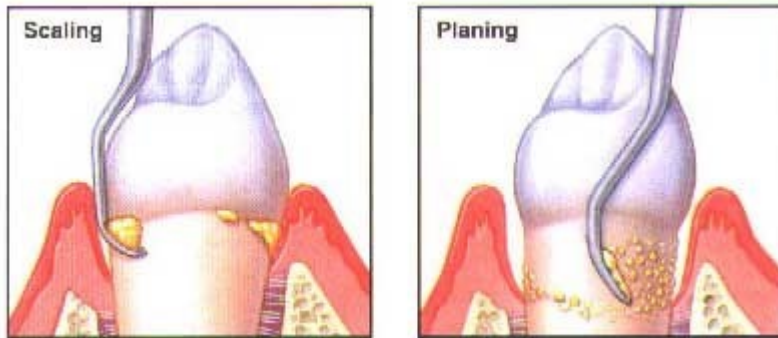
Your treatment will be carried out by your dentist, or, if the periodontal disease is more aggressive or more advanced, you may be referred to a periodontist. A periodontist is a dentist who specialises in treatment of gum problems.

Treatment of early stage gum disease or gingivitis may require simple scaling and cleaning, which involves removal of plaque and calculus from above the gum line, and in shallow pockets below the gum line. This is often done in one visit, although your dentist may advise a second visit if there is a significant build up.

You will receive advice on brushing and flossing. If you are a smoker, it is advisable to quit smoking, as there is a very strong link between smoking and periodontal disease. If you continue to smoke, the chances of successful treatment are reduced.

You may be advised to return at more frequent intervals to have your teeth cleaned and to check there is no progression to more advanced disease.

For periodontal disease which has resulted in deeper gum pockets, it is necessary to clean the root surfaces to remove deposits and bacteria. This is called **root planing** and may be done over several visits with the aid of a local anaesthetic.



COST

You should be provided with an estimate of cost before you commence treatment. Should any additional work become necessary due to unforeseen circumstances your dentist will advise you of this and any additional costs at the time.

Once your treatment is complete, your dentist will discuss the results. If the gums have responded well and you are maintaining your oral hygiene, a program to maintain oral health will be developed. It may be necessary to reduce the interval between your regular examination and cleaning appointments.

However if there are still signs of the disease, further treatment may be required, for example antibiotics or in severe cases gum surgery. Progression of periodontal disease results in eventual tooth loss.

Options to replace lost teeth may include dentures, bridges or implants, although bone loss may make implant treatment problematic, and active periodontal disease reduces the chances of successful implant treatment, or complex restorative treatment such as dental bridges.

Brushing and cleaning between your teeth daily with floss or Piksters are essential to the maintenance of your oral health, and the prevention of periodontal disease. Your dentist can advise you on suitable products for you to use.

DISCUSS YOUR TREATMENT WITH YOUR DENTIST

This information leaflet is intended to provide general information about the treatment. It is important for you to always discuss your treatment with your dentist, which will depend on many factors including age, condition and position of your teeth, as well as pre-existing conditions and the degree of the problem. Your dentist cannot guarantee treatment will be successful and it is important that you fully discuss treatment, all costs and the likely expected outcome. We encourage you to discuss in detail anything you are unsure of or are unhappy with about your teeth.