Treatment of Periodontitis

Treatment methods of periodontal disease depend upon the type and severity of the disease. After bone death has occurred, the first step is usually a special cleaning, called “gum infection therapy.”

Gum infection therapy involves removal of calculus, bacterial plaque, bacterial toxins, and diseased tissue from the inner lining of the crevice surrounding the teeth. The treatment can include use of local anesthetic, ultrasonic and hand instrumentation, DEKA laser treatments, local or systemic antibiotics, and/or medication delivery trays.

The purpose of gum infection therapy is to reduce some of the causes of periodontal disease to a level more manageable by your own immune system. Some of the conditions caused by periodontal disease are irreversible. The consequences of doing nothing about your periodontal condition may include, but are not limited to:

- Worsening of the disease and increased bone death
- Tooth loss
- Increased infection
- Systemic problems and disease
- Bleeding
- Pain and soreness

There are risks and benefits to every procedure, please visit with your dental hygienist about possible negative outcomes after gum infection therapy including, but no limited to:

- Sore and bleeding gums
- Increased tooth sensitivity
- Appearance of “elongated” teeth
- Variable response to treatment

There are many factors involved that determine the success of treatment, including the patient’s home care, tobacco cessation, and each patient’s individual physiological makeup. If the disease continues to advance despite our efforts, and the periodontal pockets deepen with more of the supporting bone being lost, further treatment or referral to a periodontist (a gum specialist) may be necessary.

For more information, please visit www.perio.org and review the “Patient Resources” section.

DENTISTRY BY DESIGN

Periodontal Disease

Periodontal Diseases

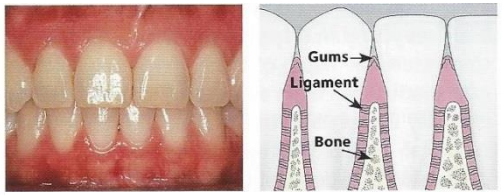
"Periodontal disease" is an umbrella term that encompasses gingivitis (the reversible form), and periodontitis (the irreversible form).

Gingivitis is the mildest form of periodontal disease. It is caused by bacterial plaque, and results in the gums becoming red, swollen, and prone to bleeding. Because gingivitis is caused by inadequate oral hygiene, it can be reversed through professional cleanings and good home care.

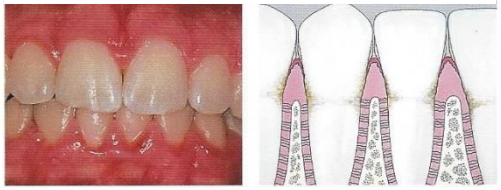
Untreated gingivitis can progress into **Periodontitis.** Over time, the bacterial plaque grows and spreads below the gum line, and toxins produced by the plaque irritate the gums. The toxins stimulate a chronic inflammatory response in the body, and much like an autoimmune disease, the body destroys the tissues and bone that support the teeth in an effort to fight against the bacteria.

Periodontitis usually progresses slowly over time, and starts with the gums separating from the teeth and forming pockets that become infected. As the disease worsens, the pockets deepen and more gum tissue and bone are destroyed. Eventually, teeth can become loose and may have to be removed due to lack of bone support.

Stages of Periodontal Disease

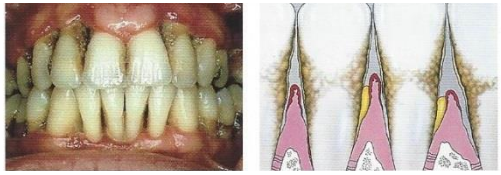


Healthy gingiva (gum tissue), periodontal ligament and bone anchor teeth firmly in place.



Gingivitis develops as toxins and other plaque by-products irritate the gums, making them tender, swollen, and likely to bleed easily

Periodontitis occurs when plaque by-products lead to death of tissues that anchor teeth in the bone. As the disease progresses, pockets form, which allow more plaque to collect below the gum line. Tooth roots are exposed and may become at risk for decay and sensitivity to cold and touch.

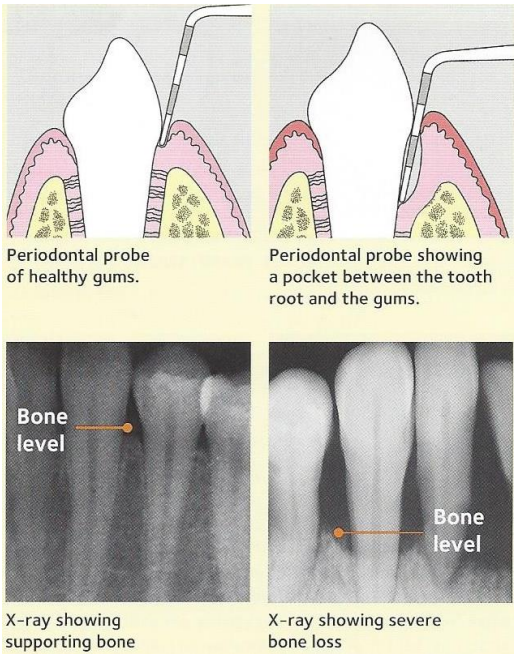


In advanced periodontitis, the teeth lose more support as the disease continues to destroy the periodontal ligament and bone. Unless treated, the affected teeth frequently become loose and may fall out or require removal by a dentist.

Risk Factors

There are several factors that increase the risk of developing periodontal disease, these include:

- Smoking or using chewing tobacco
- Other diseases such as diabetes, blood cell disorders, and HIV
- Medications
- Changes in the body's hormones (teenagers, pregnant women, etc.)
- Genetics



Periodontal probe of healthy gums.

Periodontal probe showing a pocket between the tooth root and the gums.

X-ray showing supporting bone

X-ray showing severe bone loss

Checking for periodontal diseases