



Gum recession with plaque

How do we treat periodontitis?

It is most important that you are able to effectively remove plaque thoroughly from the teeth. This will require a great deal of effort and time on your part. Without this commitment treatment will ultimately fail. The hygienist's most important job is to show you how this can be achieved by using your toothbrush, and other specialized brushes that allow cleaning both above and below the gum line as well as the spaces between the teeth.

Gingivitis

If you have gingivitis, this is reversible and can be treated. The hygienist will remove all plaque and calculus (tartar) deposits from the teeth and advise on how to keep the teeth clean.

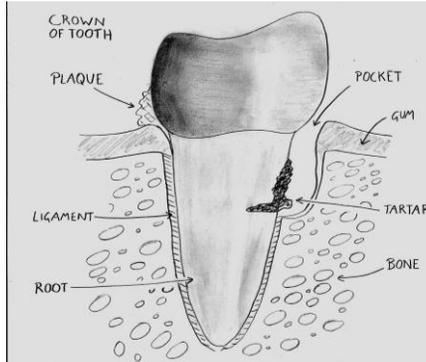


Diagram showing pocket formation as the gum and bone lose their attachment to the tooth as a result of plaque and calculus.

Periodontitis

Your hygienist will record the level of periodontitis by carrying out a detailed pocket chart. This way we know which teeth have been affected and how far it has progressed.

Once we know where the deeper pockets are together with any signs of bleeding and plaque formation the hygienist can carry out deep cleaning of these areas (sometimes local anesthetic is used). This can take several visits. Regular monitoring with the hygienist is then recommended

Aims Of Treatment

The aim of this treatment is to take away the plaque to allow the gums to heal. This results in less bleeding, inflammation, swelling and any bad taste associated.

Periodontitis (Gum disease)



What Is Periodontitis?

Periodontitis is when the gums, bone and ligaments supporting the teeth become inflamed and begin to break down. If the condition is left untreated it may lead to the teeth becoming loose and eventually being lost

Q&A



Tartar on the backs of lower teeth

Cause and signs of Periodontitis

The main cause of periodontitis is plaque formation around the teeth. Plaque is a soft sticky white, bacteria filled substance that continually forms around all teeth. Unless this sticky film is thoroughly removed daily it can lead to gingivitis, which can progress in time to periodontitis.

Factors that are known to increase the risk of periodontitis are:

- Smoking
- Systemic diseases
- Diabetes
- Stress
- Diet

Your hygienist will discuss with you how to limit these factors as well as how to prevent plaque accumulation around the teeth.

Signs and Symptoms

Most people notice some of the following but occasionally periodontitis may progress silently with no obvious signs.

- Redness or swelling of gums
- Bleeding gums
- Bad breath or taste
- Receding gums
- Loose teeth
- Mobile teeth
- Drifting teeth

Your dentist or hygienist will be able to examine your gums and tell you whether you have periodontitis and which teeth are affected.

My gums bleed when I brush, am I brushing too hard?

No, your toothbrush is finding areas of gum that are already inflamed due to plaque formation. If you can effectively remove the plaque the gums will heal and will stop bleeding when you brush.

Is periodontitis linked to heart disease?

Possibly, there does seem to be a link between the two where gum disease probably is detrimental to the heart and vice versa.

What is the difference between tartar and plaque?

Tartar is a hard deposit formed from calcified plaque, it can only be removed professionally where as plaque is soft and can easily be removed with good home brushing.

Should I use an electric toothbrush?

Electric toothbrushes can be very effective in removing plaque if used correctly. However a good quality manual toothbrush can also be highly effective.

Are there any side effects of hygienist treatment?

Sometimes the teeth and gums can be a little sensitive and sore for a few days after treatment.

Would a mouth rinse help?

Not usually, you cannot remove plaque with a rinse.