

At The Practice we pride ourselves on ensuring our patients are well informed on their dental health and treatment options. This information sheet is aimed to give you general information and risks involved with procedures. Your dentist will be able to identify your specific risks and benefits. As always our providers will endeavour to manage any undesired outcomes for you and perform procedures with the highest level of safety and care for you.

WHAT IS PERIODONTAL DISEASE?

Periodontal disease (more commonly known as gum disease) is an inflammatory disease of the supporting structures of the teeth. These structures include gingiva (gum), periodontal ligament and alveolar bone. The gum, being the most superficial tissue, gives most of the signs and symptoms of periodontal disease such as bleeding when brushing or flossing, redness, swelling and also recession or loss of tissue. When inflammation is confined to the superficial layer (the gum), the condition is known as gingivitis. This is a very common condition affecting adults and children alike. When inflammation spreads to deeper structures (such as bone) the condition is known as periodontitis.

WHAT CAUSES PERIODONTAL DISEASE?

There are two main culprits which cause gum disease. Firstly, the bacteria. The buildup of bacteria is known as dental plaque and calculus and this leads to gum inflammation (gingivitis). If gingivitis is allowed to go untreated for a long time, the gum lifts off the teeth and small pockets between the gums and the teeth can develop and grow larger.

Secondly, individual immune responses are what causes the body to destroy its own structures such as the gum and bone. As the bacteria progress deeper into the tissues, destruction of the underlying bone and the periodontal ligament can occur. Progression of this disease may lead to tooth mobility and /or tooth loss.

WHAT TREATMENT IS INVOLVED?

Unfortunately once you have periodontal disease it is a chronic condition that is “incurable” similar to diabetes or blood pressure. But thankfully it can be controlled and maintained.

Gum disease causes permanent damage to the supporting tissues. The aim of treatment is to arrest the progression of the disease through controlling the bacteria. In the vast majority of cases the progression of gum disease is prevented with adequate oral hygiene and a periodontal management therapy program prescribed by your dentist.

Management of gum disease becomes difficult and less predictable the more advanced the disease. Therefore, early diagnosis is key. If you have any symptoms of gum disease, see your dentist. Regular dental examinations are important to check for the presence of gum disease.

Healthy gums should not bleed, so to manage and treat gum disease, the bacteria must be reduced to a level the body's defence mechanism is able to handle. Treatment usually involves:

- Achieving the best possible oral health at home
- Professional cleaning of the teeth above and below the gum line (into the pockets) to remove the plaque and hard deposits (calculus/tartar). This is most commonly done under dental anaesthetic so treatment has very little discomfort.
- Regular reviews and maintenance by your dentist or hygienist
- Eliminate risk factors such as smoking and controlling diabetes.

WHAT AFFECTS TREATMENT RESULTS?

Many factors can affect the success of treatment

1. Your general health, condition of your teeth and root support around the teeth, gum tissue etc. While we can exert the utmost care and diligence, and the patient can follow all instructions, there are no guarantees that all the disease will respond effectively.
2. Commitment to treatment. Initial periodontal treatments are usually completed in several appointments. Once treatment has begun, it is absolutely necessary that the treatment is completed, and the patient must diligently follow any and all instructions. Diligent home care is mandatory. Without it, the likelihood of unsatisfactory results increases greatly. This includes

3. committing to follow up care and re-evaluations as gum disease can go backwards and need constant maintenance and re-treating throughout your lifetime.

SIDE EFFECTS OF TREATMENT?

1. Some discomfort is common after periodontal treatment. Usually, this discomfort is short lived. Instructions will be given to control any pain or soreness; this is generally controlled by over-the-counter medication like Nurofen or Panadol. Following any periodontal surgery. It is possible and sometimes likely for the following to occur:
2. Sensitivity is expected after treatment because the inflammation involved in gum disease resolves and the gums will recede to become healthy again. This can expose root surfaces of teeth and remove build up that has been present for some time. Sensitivity is normally temporary and can be transient. Speak to your dentist if it is persistent.
3. Bleeding – Some bleeding is normal especially when brushing or flossing because the inflammation will take days to heal. However, if bleeding is occurring spontaneously and continuously, you should receive immediate attention from the emergency department.
 - a. Bruising/Swelling – Bruising and/or swelling may occur and can last a few days or even a few weeks.
 - b. Nerve Injury – While rare, nerve injury can still occur and is commonly related to the use of anaesthetics.. This includes nerves in the tongue, lips, cheeks and the floor of your mouth. The numbness which could occur may be temporary, only lasting a few days to a few weeks' time. It could possibly be permanent.
 - c. Infection – While proper sterilisation and cleanliness are carefully adhered to, the human mouth and oral cavity are inherently non-sterile environments. Infection can still occur. Occasionally, infection can result in swelling, fever, malaise etc. Attention should be received as soon as possible, especially if fever is present.
 - d. Bacterial Endocarditis – Bacteria is present in the oral cavity. This is a normal condition. The tissues of the heart (for reasons known or unknown i.e., rheumatic fever, etc) may be susceptible to a bacterial infection and is transmitted via the blood vessels. Bacterial endocarditis (otherwise known as infection of the heart) is a very serious condition. If any heart problems are known or suspected, the patient agrees to inform the doctor before any treatment has begun.
 - e. Reactions to medication – Allergic reaction is also a possibility; however, it is very rare.
 - f. Despite all medical advances in the area of gum disease, it is still a chronic deteriorating disease and teeth may be deemed hopeless and require removal. Your dentist will discuss any "hopeless" teeth with you prior to treatment as well as any teeth considered borderline in their survival.

I, _____ have read the above information, received an information sheet on gum disease and had the opportunity to ask the dentist any questions and have received satisfactory explanations regarding the procedure and risks involved. I have also received a detail treatment plan from The Practice - Modern Dentistry & Facial Aesthetics for the initial treatment, but I have also been made aware that further treatment will be required and will be quoted at re-evaluation appointments.

I agree to give my consent to have periodontal treatment as per my dentists' recommendations.

Date: _____ Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____