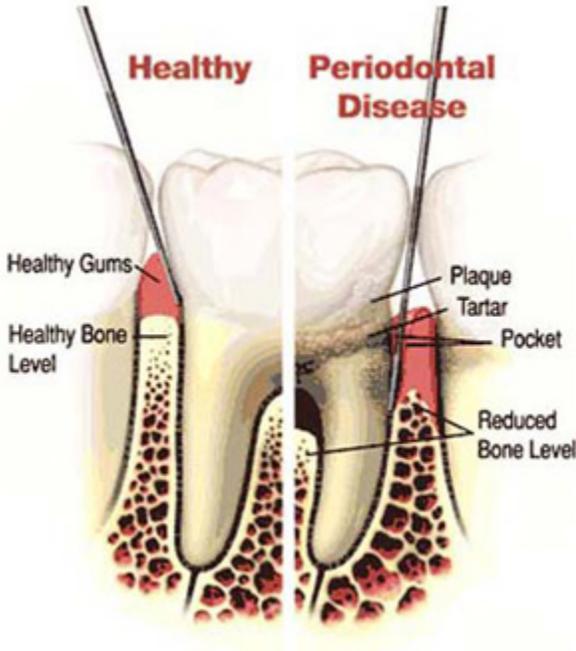


Periodontal Disease

Periodontal disease (PD) (pyorrhoea) is a bacterial infection that begins in the gums as gingivitis and then spreads under the gums to bone. The bacteria that cause the infection live in plaque. If plaque is not removed, then bacteria start to eat away the gum and eventually the bone. What results is a gum pocket that traps food and becomes difficult to keep healthy, even with scrupulous care.



When bacteria remain under the gums several significant problems occur:

- bleeding gums
- swollen gums
- red gums
- root cavities (very difficult to treat)
- formation of calculus/tartar which cannot be removed

with brushing

- loose teeth
- change of bite
- bad breath
- pus under the gums
- further bone loss

Once this bone is lost it usually cannot be replaced.

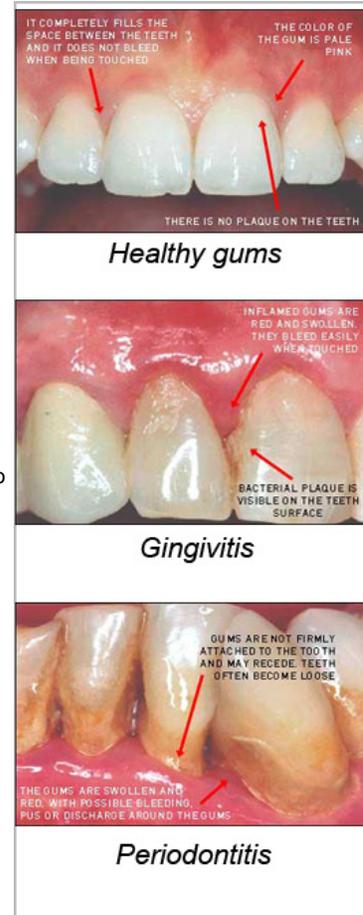
The goal of periodontal treatment is to stop the loss of bone and gum. Unfortunately PD is like diabetes in that there is no 'cure' for it. There is no 'tablet' or 'medication' that you can take to stop the progression. The 'treatment' for PD is mainly about CONTROL of the disease.

The following are facts about PD :-

- it can develop from as early as adolescence
- it usually develops over a long period of time
- there is no direct cause
- there is no cure
- plaque significantly contributes to it
- it can be related to stress, hormonal changes and oral health
- 90% of the success of the 'treatment' depends on you

Therapy is usually in three stages. The objective of the first phase of therapy is to help you maintain the highest level of dental health through education and maintenance programs. Since essentially plaque develops daily, our long-term goal is prevention. Maintenance becomes primarily your responsibility and is the KEY TO LONG-TERM DENTAL HEALTH AND PREVENTION OF DISEASE. We usually recommend, after the first therapy, that you return for a series of continued treatments for what we call a 'holding period'. Because we want to be sure that you can properly take care of your teeth we will teach you a technique to remove the plaque daily by proper brushing and flossing. We will also recommend certain products which are excellent for gum disease. In keeping with our philosophy of biologic dentistry or bio- aesthetic dentistry we will offer you a total health care program.

The objective of the second stage is to clean out the infection from under your gums and along your roots. This can either be done by subgingival scaling, deep scaling, or root planing and curettage, depending on the severity of the disease. Scaling is the removal of tartar or calculus. Root planing is the smoothing of the root surface. Curettage is the removing of the inner lining of gum. Special x-rays will help us decide the correct procedure. These procedures usually require local anesthetic. After therapy the infection should be under control. Remember the goal of this phase to help you achieve proper health and function.



When these treatments are completed, we will carefully reexamine your mouth to evaluate your healing response. In areas where gum and bone have not healed, we will need to consider the third phase of therapy. The objective of this phase is to establish healthy bone levels and manageable gum depth. This phase will involve either gum surgery, bone grafting, gum grafting or crown lengthening.

No treatment will be started until you understand the problems that exist, how they should be treated and the cost involved. Periodontal therapy can achieve a great deal in prolonging and maintaining the health of your teeth and their supporting tissues. Our philosophy of treatment is to inform before we perform. We want you to be able to prevent this sort of problem from returning and retain as many teeth as possible for the rest of your life.