

How do I keep my gums healthy?

- > Follow the brushing and flossing methods advised by your oral health professional
- > Quit Smoking
- > Gum diseases tend to recur - be aware of any changes in your mouth
- > See your dentist immediately if you notice any of the following:
 - » Gums that bleed easily
 - » Persistent bad taste or bad breath
 - » Trouble chewing
 - » Any change in your bite or the fit of partial dentures
 - » Loose teeth
- > Notify your dentist if you are diagnosed with diabetes for special home care tips
- > Regular dental visits will ensure that you and your oral health professional are aware of any treatment required

Your dentist may need to discuss your treatment with your general medical practitioner if there are existing conditions or medications being taken that may affect periodontal treatment outcomes.

Acknowledgement:

Colgate Periodontal Education Program | Colgate Oral Care



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Periodontal treatment is an ongoing course of treatment that aims to preserve your teeth and gums for life.

Periodontal treatment comprises of an initial treatment phase in which plaque (film of bacteria that builds up on teeth) and calculus/tartar (calcified plaque) are removed, followed by a review of your gums for signs of active destructive disease. If all is stable, you will be placed on a maintenance program.

Figure 1. Periodontal disease pre-treatment



What is maintenance treatment?

Gum diseases tend to recur. For this reason, maintenance therapy forms an integral part of your dental treatment. At maintenance visits, your oral health professional will monitor the health of your gums, refine the way you clean your teeth, and remove any plaque or calculus that has accumulated.

Treatment of periodontal diseases may be unsuccessful if proper maintenance therapy is not followed through.

What is a good treatment result?

A good treatment result is achieved when the disease process has stabilized. Evidence of this includes

- > ability to maintain a high level of oral hygiene, resulting in minimal deposits of plaque around the teeth and gum-line
- > decrease or elimination of bleeding from the gums
- > little or no remaining calculus or plaque on the roots of teeth and
- > closer attachment of the gum tissues to the teeth.

What are the advantages of having periodontal treatment?

In the short term, your mouth will look and feel healthier after periodontal treatment. Gum tissues that were swollen and bled easily will become firmer and pinker. Bad taste and bad breath associated with bleeding from the gums will have improved. Your teeth will feel smooth and look clean. In the long term, periodontal treatment provides you with a better chance of keeping your teeth for life.

Are there any side effects of periodontal treatment?

Some periodontal procedures may cause discomfort, particularly root planing (deposits above or below the gum line scraped off the roots of teeth). If you require a number of appointments for root planing, you may prefer to have pain-killing injections in the areas to be cleaned. Following periodontal treatment, your gums may feel tender for a day or so. It is important to keep the tooth surfaces next to gums clean by using a soft toothbrush. You may be advised to use a mouthwash containing chlorhexidine if brushing is too uncomfortable. Tooth sensitivity, particularly with hot or cold drinks, may occur after periodontal treatment. For most people, this ceases within a week. If sensitivity persists, your oral health professional may recommend desensitizing toothpastes or apply desensitizing pastes to the affected surfaces.

Desensitizing toothpaste may ease sensitivity following periodontal treatment. Chlorhexidine mouthwash may be recommended if brushing is uncomfortable. In some people, gum shrinkage may occur after periodontal treatment. If your gum tissues are very swollen at the start of treatment, you are more likely to have some shrinkage. Specialised surgical procedures are possible to re-build the gum line.

Figure 3. Before periodontal treatment

Arrows point to areas of advanced bone loss, swelling and pocketing.

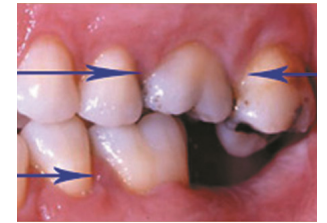


Figure 4. Gum shrinkage following periodontal treatment (last tooth at top not visible).



Your periodontal treatment program will bring opportunities to discuss dental treatment options available to you. You are encouraged to ask questions, make suggestions, and be involved in your periodontal care. Periodontal treatment is an integral component of your total dental care, which will help you keep your natural teeth for life.