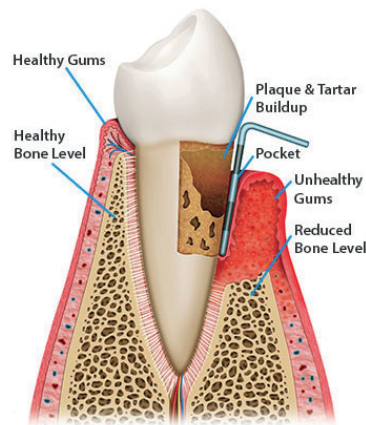


Periodontic Referrals

What is periodontitis?

- Periodontitis is an advanced form of gum disease. It is caused by bacteria in dental plaque which collects at the gum margins.
- If the bacteria are not effectively removed on a regular basis by brushing and cleaning in between the teeth, they can start to spread down the tooth root surfaces and form deepened spaces between the teeth and gums called “pockets”.
- It is difficult to remove the bacteria in these pockets and this leads to further progression of infection and disease.



Why do some people get periodontitis but not others?

- Approximately 50% of the population have some form of gum disease often without knowing it, and around 10% of the population suffer from more severe periodontitis.
- Genetics is a major factor that increases an individual's susceptibility to periodontitis.
- Other risk factors that contribute to periodontitis include smoking, diabetes, poor nutrition, obesity and some other medical conditions.

What are the consequences of periodontitis?

- The main consequences of periodontitis are destruction of the tissues supporting teeth, loss of bone from around teeth and ultimately, tooth loss.
- You may notice bleeding gums, sore gums, bad breath, gum recession, gaps appearing between the teeth, wobbly teeth, teeth moving out of position, food trapping between teeth, teeth appearing longer and increased sensitivity to cold or hot food and drinks.

Why have I been referred?

- A periodontist has more training and experience in treating patients with a variety of gum conditions.
- They will work closely with a team of hygienists, your general dental practitioner, and specialists in other disciplines if required to provide you with comprehensive care.
- Achieving gum health can help you keep your natural teeth for longer and improve the function of those teeth for chewing and eating.
- In addition, there is growing evidence to show links between gum health and general health.

Periodontic Referrals

What does treatment involve?

- Initial treatment aims to get your gum health back under control. This includes identifying and managing your risk factors, tailored coaching in the most effective methods of cleaning your teeth and gums at home, and deep cleaning to remove bacteria from deepened gum pockets.
- The next stages of treatment may include further courses of deep cleaning. At some sites where deep pockets persist, minor gum surgery may be indicated.
- When gum health has been achieved it is important to continue with regular monitoring and supportive care to maintain health.

What are the main benefits of treatment?

- Keeping your natural teeth for longer
- Reduced gum bleeding and soreness
- Greater confidence of a cleaner, fresher mouth
- Teeth feeling firmer
- Improved comfort when eating

What are the main side-effects of treatment?

- Gum bleeding and soreness may initially increase temporarily as your cleaning techniques change. However, this will reduce as your gum health improves.
- Healthy gum likes to be close to bone, so gum recession will be more noticeable in areas that have lost more bone. This may make some teeth appear longer and lead to increased sensitivity of some teeth.
- Some gaps in between the teeth would get larger as the gum recedes. This may lead to more food getting caught between the teeth.

What are the main alternatives to treatment?

- You may wish not to proceed with the type of treatment outlined above. The main alternatives would be extraction of severely affected teeth or no treatment at all.
- There is nothing quite like your own teeth, therefore extraction would not usually be recommended unless a tooth is untreatable.
- The main risk of not undertaking any treatment would be progressive bone loss around affected teeth leading to early tooth loss.