

## Treating periodontal or gum disease

Periodontal disease is the inflammation and infection of the gums. It is caused by excessive plaque bacteria, which can damage the gums and other supporting structures of the teeth. Periodontal disease can also result from immunosuppressant conditions and genetic predisposition.

### Gingivitis

Gingivitis-inflammation of the gums can generally be successfully treated with scaling performed by your dentist or hygienist.

It is then essential to maintain a thorough dental hygiene plan-brushing and flossing at least twice daily.

### Periodontitis

Periodontitis-advanced gum disease-can permanently damage the teeth and gums, as well as the bone and ligaments that support the teeth.

The teeth may become loose and fall out or need to be extracted. Left unchecked, periodontitis can result in the loss of many or all of the teeth.

There is no cure for periodontitis. However, the symptoms can be managed, slowing down the progression of the disease and deterioration of the teeth and supporting structures.

Treatment will result in a mouth and smile that look and feel cleaner and healthier. Your Smile dentist or hygienist may treat your condition, or we may refer you to a periodontist-a dentist who specialises in the treatment of gum disease.

### Periodontal treatment procedures

- Scaling-removing plaque and calculus or tartar (calcified plaque) from the teeth, both above and below the gum line.
- Root planing-removing plaque and calculus from the roots of the teeth using specialised instruments. This procedure may involve several visits, and a local anaesthetic may be required.
- Depending on the severity of your condition, you may need to take a course of antibiotics to halt the progression of the disease and promote healing.
- Deteriorated fillings may exacerbate the condition, and may need to be removed and replaced.
- A personal dental hygiene plan will be prepared to maintain your oral health and prevent further periodontal disease. This will involve regular maintenance visits to your dentist or hygienist, combined with thorough daily home care.
- If you have lost teeth, or some teeth have become loose, you may require a denture, bridge or dental implant.
- In severe cases, periodontal surgery may be required.

See also ...

- Preventing gum disease
- Personal dental hygiene plan