Gum Disease (Periodontitis)

THE FACTS

and Specialist Treatments available



THE DENTAL IMPLANT CLINIC

centre of excellence







Fernando Gonzalez Eriksson

Our specialist service

The Dental Implant Clinic offers specialist services in the treatment of gum disease (periodontitis). At The Dental Implant Clinic we have placed over 7,000 implants. Strong gums are vitally important prior to the successful placement of dental implants and any other dental treatment.

Our periodontal lead is Fernando Gonzalez Eriksson, whose specialist 3-year training in Periodontics was at the world renowned Eastman Dental Institute in London. He joined The Dental Implant Clinic in 2013, and he has already treated many patients with gum disease.

What is Periodontitis?

Periodontitis is a very common condition in which the gums and deeper periodontal structures become inflamed. This inflammation of the gums, which usually takes the form of redness, swelling and a tendency to bleed during tooth brushing, is the body's response to certain bacteria that have been allowed to accumulate on the teeth.

Although part of the body's defence system, this inflammatory response can eventually cause serious damage. If left unchecked the inflammation can spread down below the gums and along the roots of the teeth, causing destruction of the periodontal ligament and the supporting bone. This ultimately leads to the loosening and potential loss of the teeth.



How can I recognise Periodontitis?

Periodontitis always begins with inflammation of the gums, known as gingivitis. This is not always easy to recognise but one of the first signs is bleeding from the gums when you brush your teeth. The gums may look red and swollen and you might notice a discoloured layer of bacterial plaque on the teeth.

If left untreated, gingivitis may progress to periodontitis, often without any obvious changes. However, some changes that you might experience over time include:

- Increased bleeding from the gums, often provoked by brushing or eating (or this can even be spontaneous)
- Bad breath
- Changes in the positioning of the teeth in the jaws
- Lengthening of the teeth (gum recession)
- Pain in the gums or teeth

Bleeding from the gums may be less noticeable in smokers because of the effect of nicotine on blood vessels and so the disease process may be masked.

Often the presence of periodontitis is not recognised by an individual until they are 40 or 50 years of age, by which time a great deal of damage may have occurred.

However a screening appointment at The Dental Implant Clinic will enable us to detect signs of the disease. We can also monitor your periodontal status using a special assessment tool known as the Periodontal Screening Index.

What are the consequences of periodontal disease?

Periodontitis is the leading cause of tooth loss.

Other effects of periodontal disease are:

- Loosening of the teeth
- · Teeth may drift
- · Abscesses may form

Periodontal disease can also have some effects on general health including an increased risk for heart disease and diabetes.

What can I do to prevent periodontal disease?

The development of gingivitis and periodontitis can be prevented by adopting thorough oral hygiene habits, alongside regular professional examinations and support.

The basic elements of good oral hygiene regime are:

- Cleaning the chewing surfaces and sides of the teeth twice daily, with a toothbrush (of an appropriate size and in good condition) and toothpaste.
- Cleaning the spaces between the teeth where the toothbrush bristles cannot reach, using either dental floss or an interdental brush, depending on the size of the space. This should be done once daily.

Dental floss should be used where the teeth are close together, with little or no space between them, while interdental brushes are suitable for larger gaps. Special care should be taken to clean thoroughly around crooked or crowded teeth, or around fillings, crowns and dentures, as plaque accumulates readily in these places and access might be limited.

If, as a result of an inadequate cleaning technique, plaque deposits are left on the teeth, these will become mineralised and turn into hard, fixed deposits (calculus, commonly known as tartar) that cannot be removed with a toothbrush. Your dentist or periodontist will identify these tartar deposits during your regular dental inspection and remove them as part of a professional clean.

How can we help you?

At The Dental Implant Clinic we understand that the health of our mouths is so important for the health of the rest of our body. Our staff will aim to make you feel comfortable and make sure that the treatment that we offer is the best suited for you.

How is periodontitis treated?

With careful assessment to identify the periodontal pockets and level of disease activity followed by the correct treatment, it is usually possible to completely halt the progress of periodontitis. The key to success is to eliminate the bacterial plaque which is triggering the disease process and to establish excellent oral hygiene practices.

Oral hygiene instruction and advice

The aim of the oral hygiene phase of treatment is to reduce the number of bacteria in the mouth and therefore reduce the level of inflammation. Your dental practitioner will first explain the causes of your periodontitis and explain exactly how to keep your teeth and gums clean. You will be given individual advice on how to use the various cleaning aids most effectively; for example, the most appropriate tooth brushing technique.

Professional cleaning

All soft deposits will be removed from accessible areas of the teeth and the teeth polished and treated with fluoride. Depending on the improvement seen in plaque control and gum health, further instruction and cleaning may be carried out in subsequent visits. Bacterial deposits and tartar will also be removed from the root surfaces and gingival pockets.

Reassessment

After several weeks, your dentist or periodontist will make a full assessment of your gums to check the progress of your treatment. A special instrument called a periodontal probe is used to record the depth of any periodontal pockets and check for bleeding from the gums. If periodontal pockets are still present, further treatment options may be suggested, including surgical corrective therapy.







Corrective (surgical) treatment

Sometimes, a surgical procedure is carried out to clean away plaque bacteria and deposits that are under the gum within periodontal pockets and on the root surfaces. These areas are inaccessible to brushes and floss and inflammation will persist in these sites as long as bacteria are allowed to colonize them. Under local anaesthesia, the gum is lifted away and the root surfaces are cleaned under direct vision to ensure that all bacteria are removed. Sometimes, it is possible to treat bone loss at the same time using a special regenerative treatment. At the end of the procedure, the gums are carefully micro-stitched back into place around the teeth.

Aftercare – supportive periodontal therapy

Long-term success depends both on your own efforts with oral hygiene and those of the practice team who provide your regular care and ongoing assessment. After the first phase of treatment has been completed, your dentist will need to review the condition of your gums at regular intervals to check that the inflammation has been halted. Regular follow-up appointments are vitally important to ensure that the disease process does not recur. The frequency of your follow-up appointments will depend on the severity of disease and your individual risk of disease progression. Usually, follow-up visits are scheduled for every three to six months.

The long-term success of periodontal treatment depends on the joint efforts of you and your dental practitioner.



