



HETTON DENTAL PRACTICE

84 Station Road
Hetton le Hole
Tyne and Wear
DH5 9JB
☎(0191) 5262589

GUM DISEASE

Gum Disease is one of the most wide-spread diseases across the world, it is preventable and can be easily treated when it is found early enough.

Periodontal disease, another name for gum disease is caused by bacteria that collects at the gum line as dental plaque. The plaque needs to be removed by brushing and cleaning between the teeth twice a day. If not properly cleaned, the gum may start to come away from the tooth, forming pockets and the plaque grows down below the gum line. Over time, the bone that supports the teeth can be destroyed, the gums shrink and eventually the teeth become wobbly and fall out.

Some of the signs of periodontitis are:

- Bleeding gums
- Healthy Gums DO NOT Bleed
- Swollen and tender gums
- Bad breath
- Recession of the gums
- Tooth loss
- Sensitivity of the teeth
- Lengthening of the teeth
- Loose teeth
- Gum abscesses

Risk Factors:

There are a few factors that put people at higher risk of getting gum disease. These include: diabetes (especially if poorly controlled), smoking (possibly including e-cigarettes), stress, a diet high in sugar and low in antioxidants (fruit and veg), obesity and certain medications. There is also a genetic element to gum disease.

Gingivitis

The early stage of gum disease is called gingivitis. The symptoms are swollen, red gums which may bleed easily when you brush or eat hard foods, such as apples. You may also notice an unpleasant or metallic taste in your mouth. You may have bad breath. Gingivitis is reversible with good oral hygiene.

Periodontitis

If gingivitis is left untreated, it can develop into a more advanced stage of periodontal disease called periodontitis. If left untreated, periodontitis can lead to receding gums, loose teeth and eventual tooth loss.

How do we treat periodontitis?

Treatment aims to reduce bacteria around your teeth and stabilise the disease to stop it getting worse. Generally though, treatment cannot replace the support your teeth have already lost.

Step 1.

- You will be taught the best methods of cleaning your teeth and gums to remove dental plaque. Treatment will only work if you clean your teeth properly, twice a day, to a high standard (plaque score under 20%)
- You need to clean daily between your teeth with interdental brushes - or floss if the gaps between teeth are too tight for brushes. This is ESSENTIAL.
- You should use a small headed toothbrush or a good quality power brush - your dentist can advise you
- Tartar above the gum-line can be removed by your dentist/hygienist
- You should try to reduce your risk factors by stopping smoking and maintaining good diabetes control.

Step 2

- Once your plaque control is to the required level (plaque score under 20%); any bacteria below the gum line can be removed by your dentist/hygienist deep cleaning your teeth. You can ask for an injection to make your gums and teeth numb if you prefer.

Step 3

- Your response to treatment and oral hygiene will be assessed to determine whether more treatment is appropriate and how often this should occur; or whether you need referral to a specialist if your response to treatment is not as expected.

Step 4

- Once the condition is stabilised, your dentist and hygienist will recommend maintenance visits every 3-6 months depending on your individual response.

Success depends on how well you clean your teeth and how your gums respond. Cleaning thoroughly twice a day and regular dental visits are good habits to adopt for life.