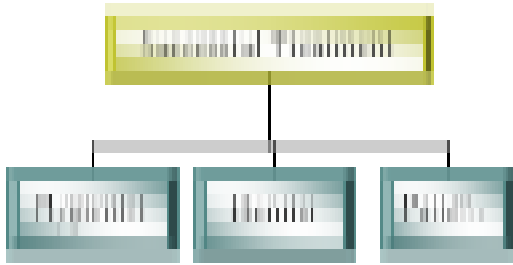


What is needed to effectively manage Periodontal Disease?

Treating periodontal disease effectively requires:



The most important of these is you, the patient. The time spent looking after your teeth at home is far greater than that spent by the dentist or hygienist. They will be able to provide the initial treatment and instruct you in how to continue the treatment at home. How successfully you manage your part of the process will determine whether the treatment is successful.

What is the initial treatment?

Once the dentist has made the diagnosis of gum disease or periodontal disease, he or she will advise you on the best treatment options available.

Initially the treatment may include scaling and root planing (deep cleaning) of the affected teeth. This will remove the plaque and other deposits that may be on the teeth, especially below the gum line. These areas

are difficult to see and difficult to keep clean.

All of this treatment can be performed painlessly. Modern equipment and techniques, local anaesthetic where necessary, makes periodontal treatment comfortable. The result will be healthy gums and teeth that can be cleaned easily by you, the patient.

Sometimes other treatments may need to be considered including:

- ◆ Removing any teeth that are too badly affected.
- ◆ Replacing or adjusting fillings
- ◆ Removing or replacing crowns or bridgework.
- ◆ Replacing badly fitting dentures.

Your dentist will discuss these with you.

Who will carry out this treatment?

Your dentist may carry out this treatment for you, however frequently once the diagnosis and treatment plan is decided a hygienist may do much of this for you.

Dental hygienists are specially trained in this area to work with dentists.

What else can the hygienist do for me?

Besides thoroughly cleaning the teeth and root surfaces the hygienist will help you with finding the best method to keep the teeth as

clean as possible yourself. This advice will be tailored to your needs.

What is my role during treatment?

During treatment you will be given particular advice regarding cleaning the teeth. Since treating the whole mouth can take several weeks it is important to adhere to the advice given by your dentist or hygienist in this initial, important phase.

Once treatment is complete the gums will be given time to heal. During this time excellent oral hygiene must be maintained. Once this time has elapsed the gums will be examined again to assess whether complete healing has occurred or whether some more treatment is required, often targeted at one or two sites.

How well you adhere to the cleaning regime recommended by your hygienist will play a large part in the success of the treatment.

How can I prevent the disease returning?

- ◆ Visit your dentist regularly.
- ◆ Regular professional cleaning with a hygienist.
- ◆ Brushing at least twice a day as instructed by your dentist or hygienist.

- ◆ Using floss or tape daily.
- ◆ Using other interdental cleaning tools such as Christmas tree shaped brushes for cleaning large gaps between teeth.
- ◆ Avoid using wooden tooth picks, these will generally damage the gums and teeth.
- ◆ Using a mouthwash if directed to by your dentist or hygienist.

Toothbrushes

There are many products on the market including specialist toothpastes, electric tooth brushes and mouthwashes. Your hygienist can recommend the most suitable ones for you.



The toothbrush's ability to remove plaque is markedly reduced when the bristles are splayed. Thus a brush needs to be replaced at the first sign of wear.

Your dentist or hygienist may advise you on the type of brush to use. This will be what is considered the most appropriate for your mouth and may be smaller than you are used to.

Using a large brush will not clean any better than a small brush.

Electric brushes do not reach any further into pockets than manual brushes.

Flossing

Flossing is for some patients a simple but laborious task, however others find floss impossible to manage, particularly around the back teeth. There are products on the market that can make this task easier which your hygienist may be able to recommend.

Smoking

Smoking is one of the biggest factors in periodontal disease. The success of the treatment will be reduced if you continue to smoke. Your dentist or hygienist may be able to help you with, or direct you to a smoking cessation programme. Some hygienists are trained in giving this advice.

Maintenance

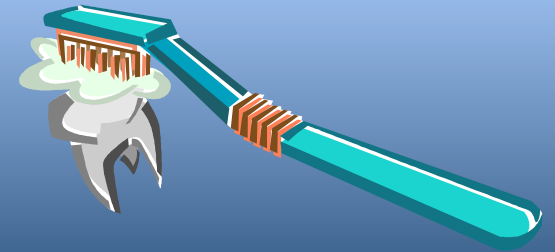
Controlling plaque levels through proper home care is critical for successful treatment. However, given that periodontal disease is rarely completely cured, rather managed, regular examination and maintenance is required to spot the early signs of the disease recurring.

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What is My Role in Managing Periodontal Disease



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