

# Periodontics

Periodontists are dentistry's experts in treating periodontal disease. They receive up to three additional years of specialized training in periodontal disease treatment in both non-surgical treatments and periodontal plastic surgery procedures. Periodontists are also experts in replacing missing teeth with dental implants.

*Non-Surgical Treatments*

*Gum Graft Surgery*

*Plastic Surgery Procedures*

## **Treatments and Procedures ›**

### **Non-Surgical Periodontal Treatment**

Non-Surgical Periodontal Treatment

AAP treatment guidelines stress that periodontal health should be achieved in the least invasive and most cost-effective manner. This is often accomplished through non-surgical periodontal treatment.

Non-surgical periodontal treatment does have its limitations. When it does not achieve periodontal health, surgery may be indicated to restore periodontal health.

Scaling and Root Planing

Scaling and root planing is a careful cleaning of the root surfaces to remove plaque and calculus [tartar] from deep periodontal pockets and to smooth the tooth root to remove bacterial toxins. Scaling and root planing is often followed by adjunctive therapy such as local delivery antimicrobials and host modulation, as needed on a case-by-case basis.

Most periodontists would agree that after scaling and root planing, many patients do not require any further active treatment. However, the majority of patients will require ongoing maintenance therapy to sustain health.

Tray Delivery Systems

A tray delivery system consists of a custom-fit tray made from impressions of the patient's mouth. Patients use the tray at home to deliver medications that have been prescribed by their dentist. Tray delivery systems were cleared by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) since they are similar to fluoride trays traditionally used to prevent tooth decay. However, the FDA clearance process did not determine that any specific medication delivered via tray delivery systems has been proven to be a safe or effective way to treat gum disease. Additionally, numerous clinical studies have suggested that topically applied medicines do not reach the source of periodontal infections. When determining the best course of treatment for your specific case, be sure to discuss the pros and cons of all available treatment options with your dental professional.

### **Gum Graft Surgery**

Exposed tooth roots are the result of gum recession. Gum graft surgery will repair the defect and help to prevent additional recession and bone loss.

Before soft tissue graft

Before Gum Graft Surgery

After soft tissue graft

After Gum Graft Surgery

Gum grafts can be used to cover roots or develop gum tissue where absent due to excessive gingival recession. During gum graft surgery, your periodontist takes gum tissue from your palate or another donor source to cover the exposed root. This can be done for one tooth or several teeth to even your gum line and reduce sensitivity. What are the benefits of gum graft surgery?

A gum graft can reduce further recession and bone loss. In some cases, it can cover exposed roots to protect them from decay. This may reduce tooth sensitivity and improve esthetics of your smile. Whether you have a gum graft to improve function or esthetics, patients often receive the benefits of both: a beautiful new smile and improved periodontal health – your keys to smiling, eating and speaking with comfort and confidence.

## **Periodontal Plastic Surgery Procedures**

Periodontists are often considered the plastic surgeons of dentistry. If you are looking to improve your smile, a periodontist may be able to help.

### **Gummy Smile or Uneven Gum Line**

Do you feel your teeth look too short and your smile is too gummy or your gums cover too much of some teeth while leaving the others the right length? If so, dental crown lengthening might be the solution for you. During this procedure, excess gum tissue is removed to expose more of the crown of the tooth. Then your gumline is sculpted to give your new smile just the right look.

### **Long Teeth/Exposed Roots**

Sometimes gum recession causes the tooth root to become exposed, which makes your teeth look long and can make you look older than you are. This recession can happen as a result of a variety of causes, including periodontal diseases.

Gum graft surgery and other root coverage procedures are designed to cover exposed roots, to reduce further gum recession and to protect vulnerable roots from decay.

### **Indentations in the Gums and Jawbone**

Tooth loss can cause an indentation in the gums and jawbone where the tooth used to be. This happens because the jawbone recedes when it no longer is holding a tooth in place. Not only is this indentation unnatural looking, it also causes the replacement tooth to look too long compared to the adjacent teeth.

Ridge augmentation can fill in this defect recapturing the natural contour of the gums and jaw. A new tooth can then be created that is natural looking, easy to clean and beautiful.