

PERIODONTAL MAINTENANCE THERAPY

Once a patient who is *susceptible* to gum disease has received initial periodontal therapy and the gum disease has been stabilised by reducing or eliminating the gum inflammation, it then becomes the **responsibility of the patient** to maintain the best possible standard of plaque control to prevent “triggering-off” the inflammatory response again in the future. However, it is only human nature to cut corners sometimes, or perhaps other life events take priority and the oral hygiene is allow to slip. Immediately plaque will begin to form and grow both on the tooth surfaces and in the pockets, leading to an accumulation of toxic bacterial waste products and this triggers the inflammatory cascade response and a return to active phase periodontitis takes place.

If a susceptible patient allows plaque/biofilm to grow and thicken, the bacterial products act like a *key* in the body’s immune system *lock* and this, turns-on the immune system activating the bone destruction around the teeth.

The only successful way to remain free of gum disease is to have regular periodontal support for correction of any plaque control short-comings and a periodontal probing examination and X-rays. From the information gathered we are able to identify any sites where the disease has become re-activated.

Once we are aware of the sites of disease activity, we can direct our advice towards helping you to achieve the necessary level of cleaning in the right way in the right places for sufficient time. In addition to providing advice, we will clean those sites to remove not only plaque, but also the calcified plaque (tartar) also known as calculus, from inaccessible sites that you have been unable to clean.

Root surfaces will develop hardened, calcified plaque or calculus within weeks of undisturbed plaque formation and maturation. This then acts as a locally retentive factor making the plaque even more difficult to remove and providing ideal environmental conditions for the development of even more aggressive gum disease leading to bone loss and ultimately tooth loss.

Maintenance Therapy is therefore an integral part of the on-going treatment of your gum disease. In summary it consists of the following:

- Re-motivation of patients to achieve the necessary standard of home care
- Identification of inflamed sites around the gums
- Identification of any cleaning technique errors
- Correction of any cleaning technique errors
- Removal of plaque and calculus from above and below the gum margins
- Assistance in controlling any temperature sensitivity after treatment

- Identification of the correct frequency of periodontal review & Maintenance Therapy