

You have a condition known as **PERIODONTITIS**.

This causes the bone, ligament and gum to be lost around your teeth. If left untreated it can lead to loose teeth and eventually tooth loss.

Inflammation in your gums is one of the bodies natural defence mechanisms to plaque (now known as **BIOFILM**) on the teeth. In some people this inflammation can be too severe and damages the supporting structures of the teeth, namely bone, ligament and gum.

What are the symptoms?

You may get bleeding gums, an unpleasant taste in your mouth, receding gums and loose teeth. Surprisingly it is rarely painful but may lead to dental abscesses if left untreated.

Why do I have it?

About 15% of the population are severely affected and milder forms of the condition affect 80% of people by the age of 60. It is known as a genetically inherited condition with trends running in families.

What about smoking?

You are 4 times more likely to have periodontitis if you smoke. Smoking is known to accelerate the damage caused and make treatment less successful. The amount you smoke is in direct proportion to the damage caused so reducing or, better still, stopping smoking is essential if you wish to keep your teeth.

You can help yourself by:

- Removing **ALL** the biofilm from your teeth once a day. This means brushing all of your teeth, which should take about 5 to 10 minutes. It is essential to clean between your teeth with dental floss or special brushes.
THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO. IF YOU DO NOT DO THIS THEN YOU CAN LOOSE YOUR TEETH.
- Use good quality fluoride toothpaste.
- Visit your Dental Hygienist at least every 3 months. Research shows that if your teeth are professionally cleaned to remove all calculus (tartar) and the biofilm from below the gum every 3 months then you are far less likely to loose your teeth.
- Quit smoking.
- Eat a healthy balanced diet.

What do hygienists do?

Our hygienists are highly trained to:

- Record in detail the extent of the damage around each tooth.
- Show you how to remove **ALL** the biofilm from your teeth and which products to use.
- Remove biofilm and calculus (tartar).
- Remove staining.

Our hygienists are trained in the use of local anaesthetic so treatment can be carried out painlessly if your teeth are particularly sensitive.

What else can be done?

Sometimes we advise antibiotics and occasionally surgery. During surgery we can try to regenerate the bone and/or gum you have lost around your teeth. We may also consider referring you to a Specialist in Periodontology.

Can you cure this?

Periodontitis can be controlled but not cured. Similar to diabetes there is no cure but by controlling the inflammation we can limit further damage and allow you to keep your teeth for a long time.