

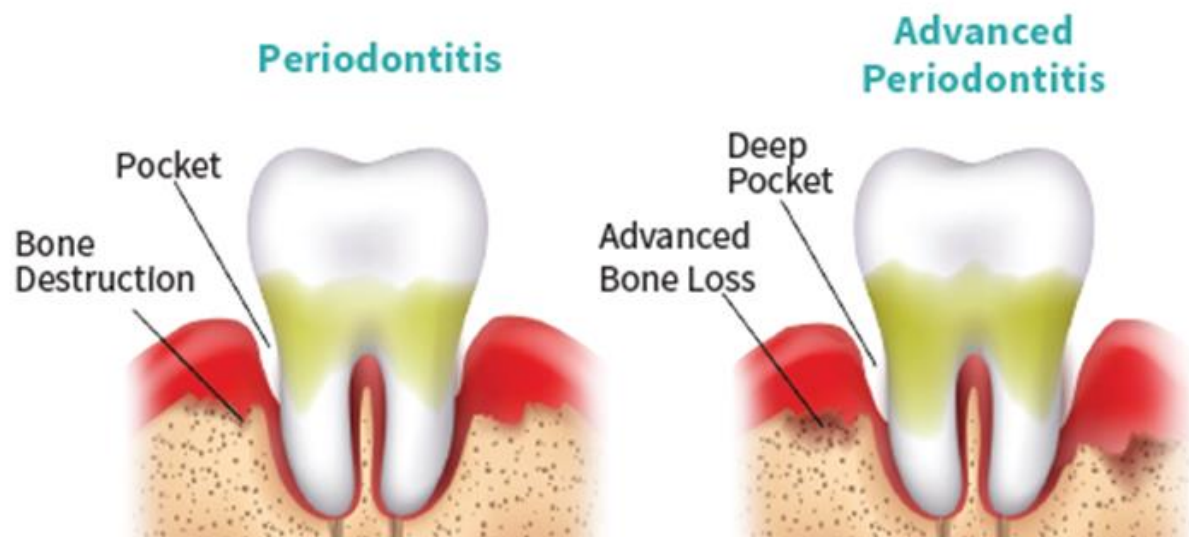
## Periodontal Disease

Periodontal disease is a chronic infection that can result in the destruction of tooth-supporting structures (i.e., the gums and/or bone) and eventual tooth loss.

Periodontitis is an inflammatory disease of bacterial origin resulting in loss of periodontal tissue attachment and bone. This leads to clinical signs such as deep pockets, bleeding on probing, gingival recession, and tooth mobility, which can ultimately cause tooth loss.

The goal of periodontal treatment is to eliminate plaque and calculus from the tooth surface and establish an environment that can be maintained in health. Treatment of periodontitis can be non-surgical or surgical. The optimal treatment is based on the patient, site and systemic factors.

Symptoms of periodontitis can include: Swollen or puffy gums. Bright red, dark red or dark purple gums. Gums that feel tender when touched.



### TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT

#### Non-Surgical

Non-surgical therapy includes:

- Patient education and oral hygiene instruction
- Complete removal of calculus above the gumline
- Restoration or temporization of cavities
- Treatment of areas where plaque and food debris can collect

Patients often require several treatment sessions for complete cleaning of the tooth surfaces. After scaling, root planing, and other adjunctive treatment approaches such as use of antibiotic therapy, the

periodontal tissues require approximately 4 weeks to demonstrate optimal effects of nonsurgical therapy.

### **Surgical**

Many moderate to advanced cases require surgical access to the root surface for root planing and reducing pocket depth, which will allow the patient to achieve successful home care. Surgical treatment would necessitate referral to a gum specialist called a periodontist.

Surgical treatment entails:

- Correction of anatomic conditions that predispose the patient to periodontitis, impair aesthetics, or impede placement of prosthetic appliances
- Extraction of teeth that cannot be successfully treated
- Placement of implants when teeth are lost

Surgical treatment options include:

- **Gum Graft Surgery:** Gum graft surgery is intended to prevent further gingival (gum) recession and bone loss and to reduce sensitivity. During this procedure, tissue is taken from the palate or another donor source to cover exposed roots.
- **Periodontal Pocket Reduction Procedures:** In this approach, gingival tissue is folded back to allow for removal of disease-causing bacteria, after which the tissue is sutured back in place. This is intended to allow gingival tissue to reattach to the bone.
- **Regenerative Procedures:** These are procedures that are performed when there is bone destruction. Once again, the gingival tissue is folded back and the disease-causing bacteria are removed, after which membranes, bone grafts, or tissue-stimulating proteins are used to help promote regeneration of supporting periodontal tissues.

### **Maintenance**

A periodontitis patient remains a periodontitis patient, even following successful therapy, and requires life-long supportive care to prevent recurrence of disease. Regular dental visits and careful oral hygiene can slow or stop the progression.