



## Periodontal Surgery

**Diagnosis:** After a careful oral examination and study of your dental condition, the dentist has advised you that periodontal disease is active in your mouth. Periodontal disease weakens support of the teeth by separating the gum from the teeth and possibly destroying some of the bone that supports the tooth roots. The pockets caused by this separation allows for greater accumulation of bacteria under the gum in hard to clean areas, and can result in further erosion or loss of bone and gum supporting the roots of your teeth. If untreated, periodontal disease can cause tooth loss and can have other adverse consequences to your health.

**Recommended Treatment:** In order to treat this condition; your dentist has recommended that treatment include periodontal surgery. A local anesthetic will be administered to you as part of the treatment. Additionally, antibiotics and other substances may be applied to the roots of your teeth.

During this procedure, the gums will be opened to permit better access to the roots and to the eroded bone. Inflamed and infected gum tissue will be removed, and the root surfaces will be thoroughly cleaned. Bone irregularities may be reshaped, and bone regenerative material may be placed around your teeth. The gums will then be sutured into position.

Unforeseen conditions may call for a modification or change from anticipated surgical plan. These may include, but are not limited to, (1) extraction of hopeless teeth to enhance healing of adjacent teeth, (2) the removal of a hopeless root of a multi-rooted tooth so as to preserve the tooth, or (3) termination of the procedure prior to completion of all the surgery originally outlined.

**Expected Benefits:** The purpose of periodontal surgery is to reduce infection and inflammation, and to restore the gum and bone to the extent possible. The surgery is intended to help you keep your teeth in the operated areas and to make your oral hygiene more effective. It should also enable professionals to better clean your teeth.

**Principal Risks and Complication:** A small number of patients do not respond successfully to periodontal surgery, and in such cases, the involved teeth may eventually be lost. Periodontal surgery may not be successful in preserving functions or appearances. Because each patient's condition is unique, long-term success may not occur.

Complications may result from the periodontal surgery, drugs, or anesthetics. These complications include, but are not limited to post-surgical infection, bleeding, swelling and pain, facial discoloration, transient but on occasion permanent numbness of the jaw, lip, tongue, chin or gum, jaw joint injures or associated muscle spasm, transient but on occasion permanent increased tooth looseness, tooth sensitivity to hot, cold, sweet or acidic foods, shrinkage of the gum upon healing resulting in elongation of some teeth and greater spaces between some teeth, cracking, or bruising of the corners of the mouth, restricted ability to open the mouth for several days or weeks, impact on speech, allergic reactions, and accidental swallowing of foreign matter. The exact duration of any complications cannot be determined, and they may be irreversible.

There is no method that will accurately predict or evaluate how your gum and bone will heal. There may be a need for a second procedure if the initial results are not satisfactory. In addition, the success of periodontal procedures can be affected by medical conditions, dietary and nutritional problems, smoking, alcohol consumption, clenching and grinding of teeth, inadequate oral hygiene, and medications that you may be taking. It is important to report to the dentist any prior drug reactions, allergies, diseases, symptoms, habits, or conditions which might in any way relate to this surgical procedure. Diligence in performing the personal daily care recommended by the dentist and taking all medications as prescribed are important to the ultimate success of the procedure.

**Alternative to Suggested Treatment:** Alternatives to periodontal surgery include:

- no treatment - with the expectation of possible advancement of your condition which may result in premature loss of teeth
- extraction of teeth involved with periodontal disease
- non-surgical scraping of tooth roots and lining of the gum (scaling and root planning), with or without medication, in an attempt to further reduce bacteria and tartar under the gum line. This may not fully eliminate deep bacteria and tartar, or reduce gum pockets – resulting in the need for more frequent professional care, and may not arrest the worsening of your condition and the premature loss of teeth.

**Necessary Follow-Up Care and Self-Care:** It is very important to continue to see your regular dentist. Existing restorative dentistry can be an important factor in the success or failure of periodontal therapy. From time to time, your dentist may make recommendations for the placement of restorations, the replacement of existing restorations, the joining together of two or more of your teeth, the performance of root canal therapy, or the movement of one, several, or all of your teeth. Failure to follow such recommendations could lead to ill effects, which would become your sole responsibility.

Natural teeth and their artificial replacements should be maintained daily in a clean, hygienic manner. You will need to come for appointments following the surgery so that your healing can be monitored and so that the dentist can evaluate the outcome of surgery upon completion of healing. Smoking or alcohol intake may adversely affect gum healing and may limit the successful outcome of the surgery. It is important (1) to abide by the specific prescriptions and instructions given by the dentist and (2) to see your dentist for periodic examination and preventive treatment. Maintenance also may include adjustment of prosthetic appliances.

**No Warranty or Guarantee:** No guarantee, warranty or assurance can be given that the proposed treatment will be successful. In most cases, the treatment should provide benefit in reducing the cause of the condition and should produce healing which will help you keep your teeth. Due to individual patient differences, however, a dentist cannot predict certainty of success. There is a risk of failure, relapse, additional treatment, or even worsening of your present condition, including the possible loss of certain teeth, despite the best of care.