



Laser use in treating Periodontal Disease (Gum Disease)

Dr. _____ has diagnosed you as having periodontal disease or gum disease. This is an infection of bone and supporting structures of your teeth. In adults, gum disease is the major reason for tooth loss. It is estimated that over 80 percent of the adult population has gum disease to one degree or another.

Periodontal bacteria can cause an inflammatory reaction which leads to destruction of the fibers that connect teeth to bone and can create a space that both dentists and hygienists call a periodontal pocket. While everyone has some amount of pocketing, the normal depths are 1-3 mm. you can keep 3 mm or less pockets clean by yourself with routine brushing, flossing and rinsing. However in your situation you have pockets that are deeper than 3 mm and it is impossible for you to clean and maintain them. As a result you have plaque and bacteria at the bottom of these pockets which has lead to a chronic infection, you may have noticed a bad taste or odor in your mouth at times from these infections or bleeding when brushing your teeth. As we age we become more susceptible to periodontal bacteria and lack of proper hygiene or cleaning is another reason for periodontal disease. Without treatment your teeth your teeth will lose enough support to become loose and painful and will eventually be lost.

How are lasers used to treat gum disease?

Dr. _____ has recommended a conservative non-surgical treatment for your periodontal disease, which includes the use of lasers. Proper homecare will be crucial and this procedure can often alleviate the problem. Your dentist or hygienist will go around each involved tooth to remove and debris and calcified deposits that are adhering to your teeth, in a process called scaling and root planning. Scaling and root planning will remove the mechanical irritants to your gums and supporting bone and also removes a major reservoir of periodontal bacteria.

After removing the tarter and calculus a laser is used to selectively remove diseased or infected tissues lining the pockets around your teeth. At the same time the laser will kill the bacteria that cause your gum disease and promote healing of your gums around your teeth. Some lasers can help increase circulation and healthy tissue formation at the bottom of your periodontal pockets and help revive or rejuvenate the attachment. This specialized treatment is usually performed multiple times over a period of a few weeks.

Is this a new procedure?

Lasers have been in use in medicine and dentistry for many years. The FDA has approved the use of lasers for many dental procedures including those discussed in this pamphlet. Following proper protocol the lasers used in Dentistry are safe and effective.

Please feel free to ask further questions. We want you to be comfortable and knowledgeable of your dental treatment.