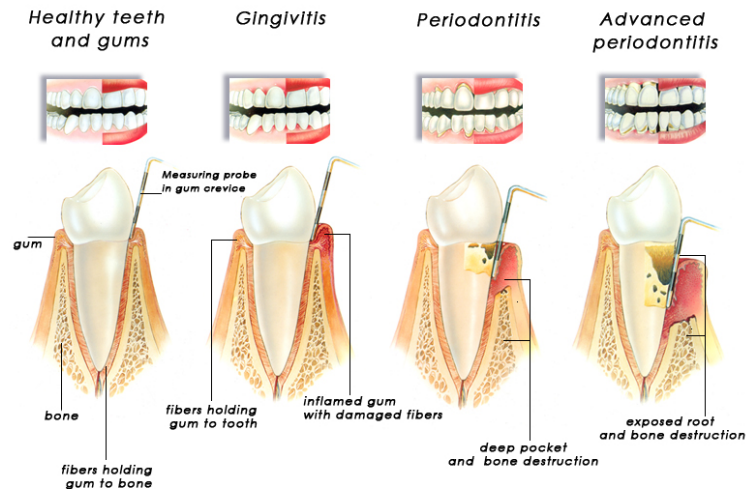


## Chronic Periodontitis

Chronic Periodontitis is the most advanced stage of gum/periodontal disease. It relates to a significant loss in the supporting structure of the teeth.

This stage of gum disease is irreversible, and cannot be cured—only controlled, with regular visits to your dentist or hygienist. If chronic periodontitis is left untreated, it will progress to abscesses, tooth root decay and tooth loss.



### How do I know if I have Chronic Periodontitis?

Each time you visit this practice for your check-up, we measure and record the level of your gum health. Therefore we would notice and inform you if you have periodontal disease.

The symptoms of periodontitis are usually those similarly suffered with gingivitis. Eg. red, swollen, bleeding or ulcerated gums. However, periodontitis can go un-noticed, and therefore progress to chronic periodontitis.

Symptoms of chronic periodontitis are those often associated with old age. These are gum recession (causing you to become 'long in the tooth'), mobile teeth and tooth movement. Symptoms can also include bad breath, an unpleasant taste and sensitive gums. However, can be avoided (despite your age!), with a good oral hygiene routine and regular cleans with your dentist or hygienist.

### What causes Chronic Periodontitis?

Chronic periodontitis is the most advanced stage of gum disease and is caused by the accumulation of calculus (tartar) and poor oral hygiene. When calculus sits on the teeth for a certain period of time, the bacteria within the calculus produce toxins. These toxins then cause the gums to detach from the teeth causing pocketing, and then gradually they eat away at the supporting bone of the teeth. This is which causes them to become mobile with time.

Smoking contributes immensely to the cause of periodontitis. It significantly increases the chance of developing chronic periodontitis, and speeds up the process from gingivitis to periodontal disease.



Some people are more prone to build up calculus, therefore a have a higher chance of developing chronic periodontitis. However, an impeccable oral hygiene routine will always reduce chances and prevent further damage.

### What can I do if I have periodontal disease?

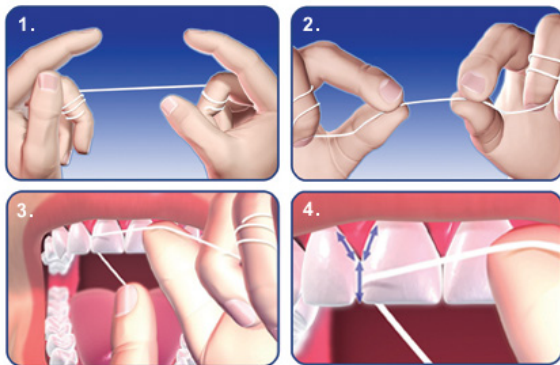
Firstly, you should visit a hygienist so that your teeth can be thoroughly cleaned by a professional. Your teeth may look clean but due to your loose gums, plaque and calculus can form beneath the gum line in the 'pockets' where you cannot reach.

Then, you should adapt a good oral hygiene routine to assure you keep your mouth clean and healthy in order to control your periodontitis. This means brushing at least 2 times a day with fluoride toothpaste, for 2 minutes at a time. Brushing is most important at night, as saliva flow is reduced when you are asleep- providing a perfect breeding ground for bacteria!

We also advise the use of Peroxyl or Corsodyl Daily mouthwashes, as they target the bacteria which cause gum disease. We would suggest you use a mouth rinse at a separate time to brushing, otherwise the fluoride you have just used to clean your teeth, is washed away.

You should also clean in between your teeth. You may brush your teeth perfectly, but you still cannot reach in between them; where the bacteria hide.

You can do this with floss, tape, or interdental brushes. Some patients can find use of these difficult to begin with. If you are one of these, ask your dentist/hygienist to demonstrate the correct technique. It is easier than you think!



Your gums may bleed or be a little bit sore to begin with when interdental cleaning. The fact the gums are bleeding means you are reaching the areas where the bacteria is present, therefore cleaning the area. So do persevere with the cleaning, and gradually the bleeding will stop, resulting in healthy gums. You can never grow back the bone that you have lost through chronic periodontitis, but you can improve the health of your gums through correct cleaning and prevent further damage.

Also, visit your dentist or hygienist for regular cleans so they can remove the bits you may have missed, and monitor your progress. Your dentist or hygienist will be able to tell you how often you should be attending in order to control your periodontal disease.

We would also strongly advise that if you smoke, to try to give up as it does make a significant difference. We can provide you with appropriate contact details and information on how to do this.