

## How To Lose Your Teeth - Guaranteed... With Gum Disease!

Gum disease, unchecked, is about as nasty as infection gets and for those who have been through the process of prolonged treatment for gum disease, know how painful and costly it is. Gum or periodontal disease is basically the inflammation and infection of the gums and there are several stages that if left untreated, will cause bone and tooth loss as well as the formation of gum pockets. Essentially, it is caused by the build up of plaque on the teeth which will eventually harden and become calculus. This build up occurs usually through poor oral hygiene. Can Periodontal Disease Be Treated? Sure it can. Following an examination, your dentist will assess the extent of the infection and how much work will be needed. A treatment plan will be suggested and for those of you who have had that initial diagnosis it's like... "Come on, give it to me straight doc!" You'll usually be told what sort of treatment will be needed along with the time frame; this can take years in some cases, the benefit of the treatment and finally, the cost. It's at this moment you wish you had listened to your mother! Keep in mind if gum disease has progressed to the advanced level there is no guarantee that teeth won't be lost. When bone loss occurs within the gums they loosen and pockets form. These pockets can become a depository for food and other small objects and over time, uncleaned, they will lead to the formation of an abscess. In many cases, the loss of teeth is the ultimate price you pay for ignoring gum disease but I think in reality, the ultimate price is the never ending visits to the dentist and painful treatment sessions. Treatment Methods Basically, the initial aim is to remove the build up of plaque and this involves a process called scaling. Plaque is removed from the surface of the teeth and also in the pockets just below the gum line. If your gum disease is even slightly advanced, then these pockets can become quite deep and without the use of anaesthetic in most cases, having a sharp instrument prodding down below the gum line is no one's idea of fun. Deposits of plaque deep in the pockets will require extended treatment and the good news is, usually under a local anaesthetic. Because the treatment can be lengthy during a visit and several areas of the mouth need to be treated, you will be required to return several times. When treatment is finally complete, your dentist will basically "give it to you straight." The treatment has produced positive response or there are still problems. In the case of the former, an oral health program will be suggested to maintain good dental hygiene or if it's the latter, well, more extensive action could be required such as periodontal surgery. Antibiotics are also suggested in non-responsive treatment. If teeth are going to be lost your dentist will suggest options such as tooth replacement via dentures or implants. But that is another story. Maintaining good dental hygiene practices will in most cases prevent most of the above or at worst, just require the odd scaling job.

## About the Author

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