

## PERIODONTAL DISEASE PROCESS



## DEFENCE DENTAL CENTRES



### Your nearest Defence Dental Centre:

- Devonport Naval Base
- Papakura Military Camp
- Whenuapai Air Force Base
- Waiouru Military Camp
- Ōhakea Air Force Base
- Linton Military Camp
- Trentham Military Camp
- NZDF Headquarters
- Woodbourne Air Force Base
- Burnham Military Camp

Visit [health.nzdf.mil.nz](http://health.nzdf.mil.nz) for more information regarding contact information.

## PERIODONTAL DISEASE



Healthy gums

Periodontal disease

## DEFENCE DENTAL CENTRE

Periodontal disease (gum disease) is a disease that affects the tissues around the roots of the teeth. The mildest form of gum disease is called gingivitis; this is where your tissues are inflamed due to a plaque build-up. Some people may develop a more destructive form of gum disease known as periodontitis; with periodontitis irreversible damage may occur to the soft and hard tissues in your mouth.

### What are the warning signs of gum disease?

Some of the symptoms may include:

- Red, swollen, bleeding or tender gums
- Bleeding gums when you brush or floss
- Gum recession and gums that pull away from the teeth
- Persistent bad breath
- Loose teeth
- Gaps between the teeth getting worse
- Tooth sensitivity
- Pus between the gums and teeth

### What causes gum disease?

- Plaque and calculus build up on your teeth
- Smoking
- Poorly managed diabetes
- Family history

### What treatment can be done for gum disease?

Your dentist, hygienist or oral health therapist can treat gum disease. Cleaning (scaling) to remove the bacteria on the tooth near and below the gum level is the first stage of treatment. In more advanced cases you may be referred to a specialist for help with your care. Sometimes minor surgery is required.



### What happens if I don't do anything about my gum disease?

If you do not control the gum disease, by at home care and routinely visiting your dentist, you are at risk of developing periodontitis. Unlike gingivitis, which can heal leaving no permanent damage, periodontitis may permanently affect the gums and the bone supporting the teeth. Sometimes periodontitis may result in tooth loss.

### What can you do?

- **Good oral hygiene habits:**
  - Teeth should be brushed twice daily for at least two minutes with a fluoride toothpaste.
  - Use a soft toothbrush or an electric toothbrush.
  - Clean between your teeth with dental floss or interdental brushes every day.
- **Give up smoking:**
  - it is a major risk factor for developing periodontal disease as it affects the blood supply it all the periodontal tissues. Smoking also delays healing so a good outcome for periodontal treatment is less predictable in smokers. Stopping smoking is good for your oral health and your general health.
- **Visit your dentist regularly:**
  - Regular professional monitoring and cleaning by your oral health professional is critical for prevention of further damage and to maintain the results of gum disease treatment. This will help to ensure your gums and teeth remain healthy in the future.

If you have any questions or queries regarding periodontal disease or your dental treatment, please talk to your dentist.