

## The Big Picture

### Oral Health & General Health

Periodontitis (gum disease) is a complicated relationship between the billions of bacteria in your mouth and your immune system. When bacteria attaches to the root of the tooth and penetrates into the tissues below the gum line, the immune system launches an attack to try and stop the infection. The key to the immune system getting started is called inflammation and a full explanation of how this works can be found in the book, Inflammation Nation by Dr. Floyd Chilton. Simply stated, all this chemical activity causes the delicate gum tissue attachment to break down and eventually results in tooth loss. This process is often painless until the advanced stage when abscesses begin to form and cause swelling.

Since no one can brush and floss away every bacterial cell from around their teeth, what is a person to do? The answer lies in the relationship to the immune system alluded to above. You don't have to get rid of them all to have healthy gums because some are considered "good" bacteria and we can usually count on our immune system to keep the bad ones in balance. When the "bad" bacteria get out of balance and get the upper hand, the gum tissue starts to detach from the root of the tooth. These are a few things that cause an imbalance:

- Poor home care that allows bacteria to buildup below the gum line.
- A weak or overburdened immune system as in a patient who smokes, or a person who is battling other chronic inflammatory diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, stress, obesity (more than 30% your body weight is made up of fat), and a diet comprised of animal products and processed foods.

Once you have been diagnosed with gum disease part of your treatment plan we recommend are the following:

1. Professional care: treatment, patient education, and training in self-care.
2. Home care: Sonicare Diamond Clean Automatic toothbrush and oral cleaning techniques for in between your teeth that must be done twice daily!
3. Strengthen you immune system by reducing your system wide levels of inflammation. Details how to do this can be found in several books written on the relationship of food to health and immune status by Dr. Joel Fuhrman, Super Immunity and Eat to Live; and by Dr. Chilton The Gene Smart Diet are great resources.
4. Long term supportive care (hygiene visits) every three months for the rest of your life.

Each of these points are critical in getting optimal results especially balancing your immune system! For more information on the various treatment options, go to our website [www.thehappygumshop.com](http://www.thehappygumshop.com) and [www.LANAP.com](http://www.LANAP.com). Click on "patient consultation" found in the upper left corner of the page.

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