

# Periodontal Surgery

*What Can I Expect?*



*A healthy*

*brings a lifetime of benefits.*

**T**he word "periodontal" literally means around the tooth. Periodontal disease, also known as "gum disease," is a chronic bacterial infection that damages the gums and bone supporting the teeth. Left untreated, it can lead to tooth loss. More importantly, research links periodontal infection to more serious problems, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and pre-term, low-birth-weight babies. As ongoing research continues to define how periodontal disease is linked to these and other health problems, good oral health is essential. As you can see, good periodontal health is a key component of a healthy body!

**M**any factors, such as oral hygiene habits, genetics, stress, general health conditions, medications and tobacco use may have contributed to your disease and can influence treatment effectiveness and disease recurrence. Periodontists are the dental professionals who specialize in treating periodontal disease. Your periodontist has recommended a tailored treatment plan to repair the damage, restore health and improve the function and/or esthetics of your smile.

**A** healthy smile brings a lifetime of benefits. You can keep dental costs down by preventing future problems. In health, you smile, speak and eat with comfort and confidence.



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You've been diagnosed with periodontal disease, and your **periodontist** has recommended periodontal surgery.

Like many patients, you may have some concerns. This brochure provides answers to **questions** frequently asked by

patients diagnosed with periodontal disease. It's important for you to find

**answers** to your questions before surgery, because knowing what lies

ahead will enable you to actively

participate in your health care decisions.

You'll be one step closer to a **healthy mouth** and a happy **smile**.

### **Why Do I Need Periodontal Surgery?**

You need periodontal surgery because your periodontist has determined that the tissues around your teeth are unhealthy and cannot be repaired with non-surgical treatment.

### **Will It Hurt?**

New treatment options using refined techniques can be performed comfortably as office procedures. Improvements in medications, local anesthesia, anxiety and pain control, and, in some cases, conscious sedation, are available to make your treatment more pleasant and comfortable.

### **How Long Will It Take To Heal?**

It's important to follow the doctor's instructions. Patients generally can expect to enjoy their normal routine the following day. Talk with your periodontist about any special post-operative considerations you may have, such as diet, exercise or follow-up medications. This will help to minimize disruption of your daily activities.

### **Will Insurance Cover The Surgery?**

Many insurance plans pay a portion of periodontal services. Your periodontal health is important, so talk to your periodontist about payment options. Oftentimes, the office staff will work with your insurance company to secure maximum benefits.

*Your comfort and confidence in the recommended treatment plan is important to your periodontist and your overall satisfaction with this health care decision. As always, if you have any additional questions about periodontal surgery, your periodontist will be happy to answer them in the privacy of an individual appointment.*

# Regeneration

The main cause of periodontal disease is bacteria in the form of a sticky, colorless plaque that constantly forms on your teeth. However, many factors (see main brochure) can cause periodontal disease or influence its progression.

Your bone and gum tissue should fit snugly around your teeth like a turtleneck around your neck. When you have periodontal disease, this supporting tissue and bone is destroyed and pockets develop. Eventually, too much bone is lost, and the teeth need to be extracted.

Your periodontist has recommended a regenerative procedure because the bone supporting your teeth has been destroyed (see figure 1.0). These procedures can reverse some of the damage by regenerating lost bone and tissue.

During this procedure, your periodontist folds back the gum tissue and removes the disease-causing bacteria. Membranes (filters), bone grafts or tissue-stimulating proteins can be used to encourage your body's natural ability to regenerate bone and tissue.

**Healthy  
Bone  
Level**



*figure 1.0  
X-ray showing  
severe bone loss*



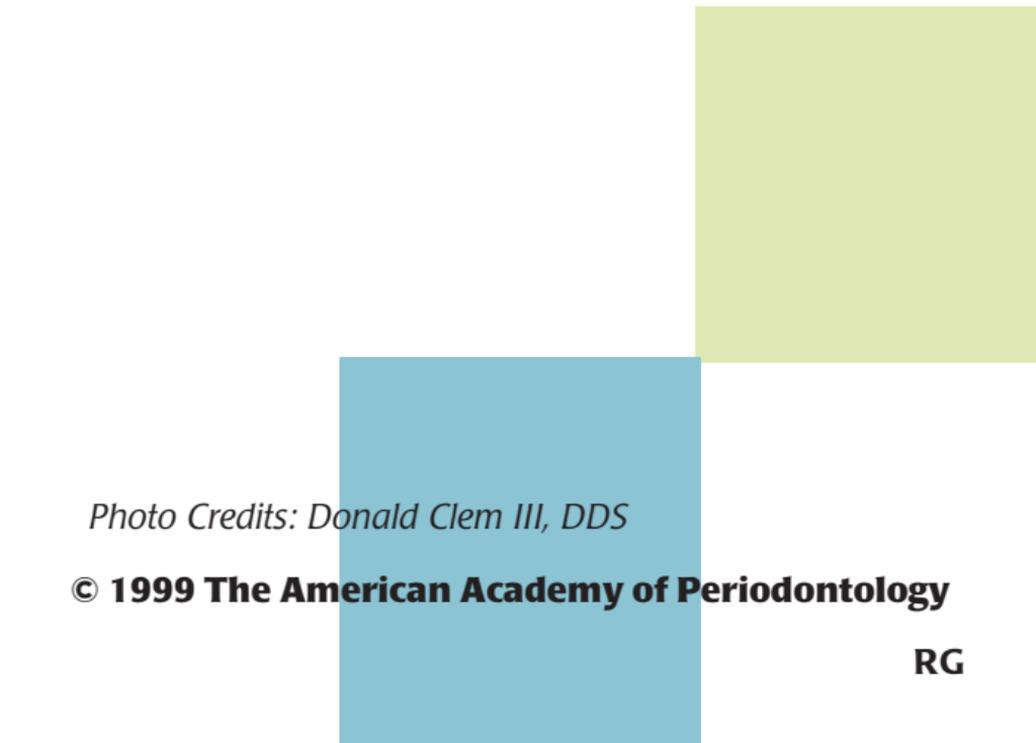
*figure 2.0  
X-ray showing healthy bone  
level restored after periodontal  
treatment*



As you can see, there are many options to enhance support for your teeth and to restore your bone to a healthy level (see figure 2.0). Your periodontist will discuss your best options with you.

## What are the benefits of this procedure?

Eliminating existing bacteria and regenerating bone and tissue helps to reduce pocket depth and repair damage caused by the progression of periodontal disease. With a combination of daily oral hygiene and professional maintenance care, you'll increase the chances of keeping your natural teeth — and decrease the chances of serious health problems (see main brochure) associated with periodontal disease.



*Photo Credits: Donald Clem III, DDS*

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# Conscious Sedation

## Anxiety-control to put your mind at-ease

Today more than ever, patients are aware of the importance of periodontal health and the potential consequences of untreated disease. Despite this



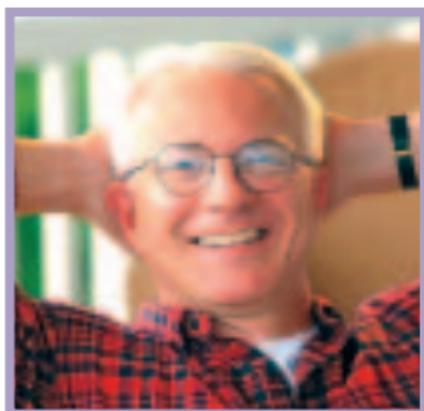
increased awareness, patient anxiety and fear concerning treatment can sometimes get in the way of optimal periodontal care. In addition to new treatment options that use refined techniques and improvements in local anesthesia, *conscious sedation* is available to make your

treatment more pleasant and comfortable. This important option has eased the minds of many periodontal patients, and unlocked the benefits of periodontal treatment for those who would have otherwise avoided it.

Your periodontist may have recommended conscious sedation as the preferred method of anxiety control to ensure that you are comfortable and relaxed during your procedure. Conscious sedation is a safe, drug-induced state in



which you are conscious and pleasantly relaxed, yet free of fear, anxiety and apprehension. The use of conscious sedation by an appropriately trained periodontist is safe and effective, and will help you feel comfortable and confident during your periodontal treatment. It is different than general anesthesia and does not carry the inherent risks associated with general anesthesia.



Conscious sedation may be administered through a number of different methods and medications. Your periodontist will explain your options and describe the one that's best for you.

Conscious sedation is available to make your periodontal care relaxed, and your road to periodontal health full of smiles.

# Crown Lengthening

Periodontal procedures are available to lay the groundwork for restorative and cosmetic dentistry and/or to improve the esthetics of your gum line.

You may have asked your periodontist about procedures to improve a "gummy" smile because your teeth appear short (see figure 1.0). Your teeth may actually be the proper length, but they're covered with too much gum tissue. To correct this, your periodontist performs crown lengthening.



*figure 1.0*

During this procedure, excess gum and bone tissue is reshaped to expose more of the natural tooth.

This can be done to one tooth, to even your gum line, or to several teeth to expose a natural, broad smile (see figure 2.0).

Your dentist or periodontist may also recommend crown lengthening to make a restorative or

*figure 2.0*

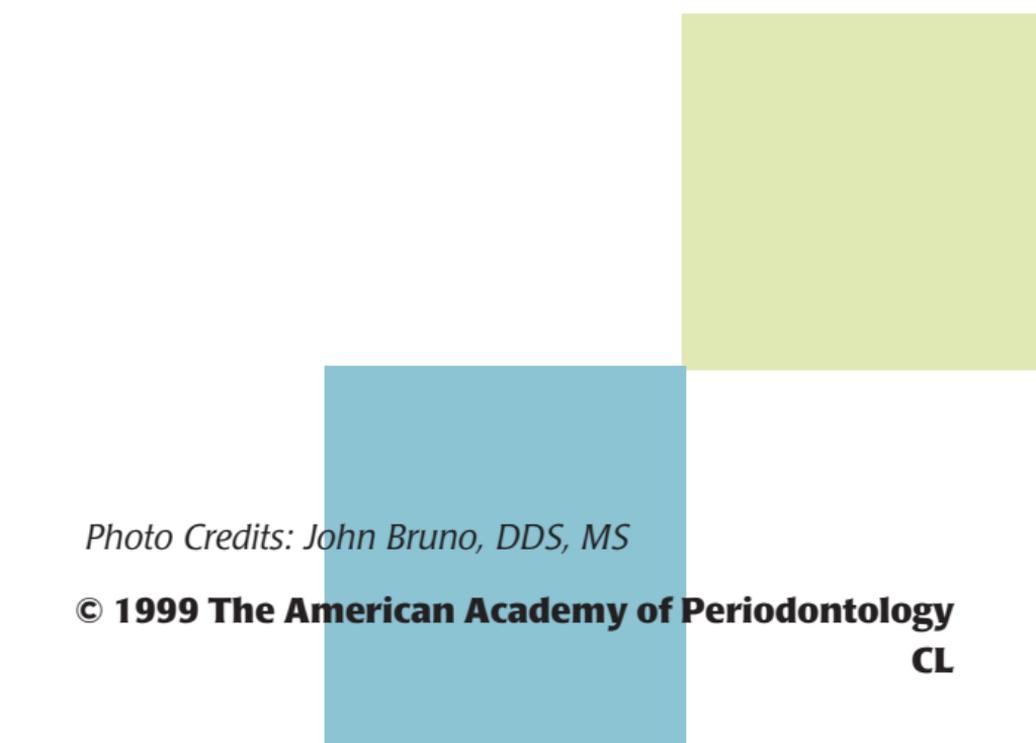




cosmetic dental procedure possible. Perhaps your tooth is decayed, broken below the gum line, or has insufficient tooth structure for a restoration, such as a crown or bridge. Crown lengthening adjusts the gum and bone levels to expose more of the tooth so it can be restored.

## What are the benefits of this procedure?

Whether you have crown lengthening to improve function or esthetics, patients often receive the benefits of both. A beautiful new smile and improved periodontal health – your keys to smiling, eating and speaking with comfort and confidence.



*Photo Credits: John Bruno, DDS, MS*

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# Functional Crown Lengthening

Periodontal procedures are available to lay the groundwork for restorative and cosmetic dentistry and/or to improve the health and esthetics of your smile.



*Decayed tooth prior to crown lengthening*

is exposed. Crown lengthening is often used as part of a treatment plan for a tooth that is to be fitted with a crown. This procedure provides the

Crown lengthening is a surgical procedure that recontours the gum tissue and often the underlying bone surrounding one or more teeth so that an adequate amount of healthy tooth



*Crown lengthening exposes more of the tooth surface*



*Crown is successfully placed*

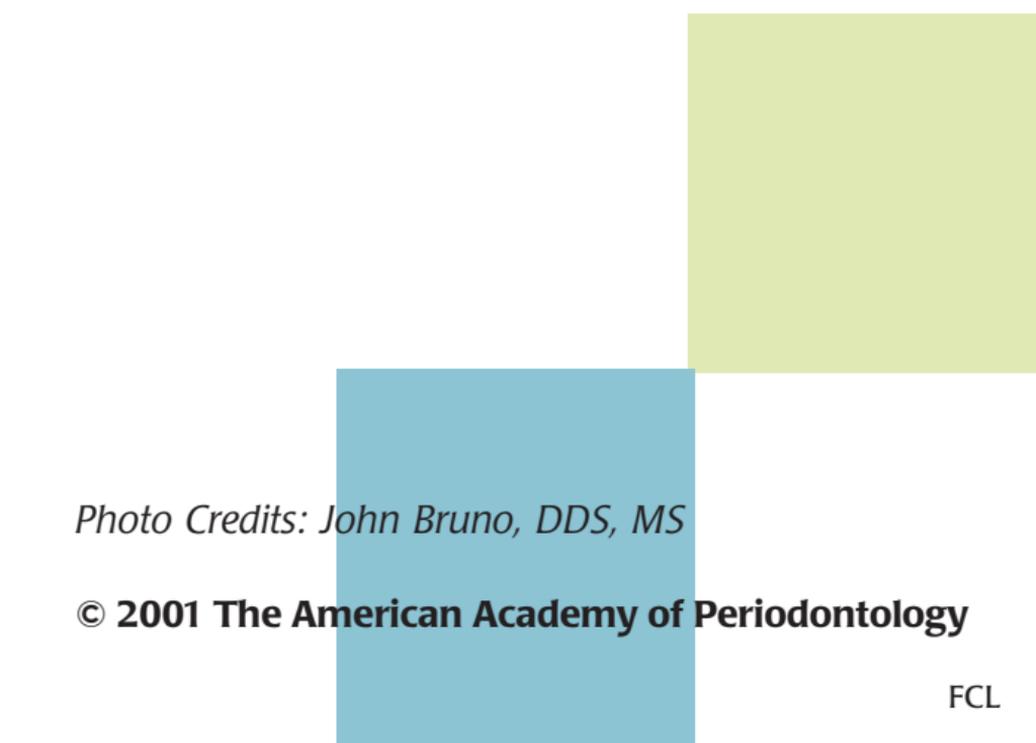
necessary space between the supporting bone and crown, preventing the new crown from damaging gum tissues and bone.



Your dentist or periodontist may also recommend crown lengthening in order to make a restorative procedure possible. If a tooth is badly worn, decayed or fractured below the gum line, crown lengthening adjusts the gum and bone levels to gain access to more of the tooth so it can be restored.

## What are the benefits of this procedure?

Functional crown lengthening is an important part of an integrated effort to optimize your health, appearance, comfort and function. A beautiful new smile and improved periodontal health are your keys to smiling, eating and speaking with comfort and confidence.



*Photo Credits: John Bruno, DDS, MS*

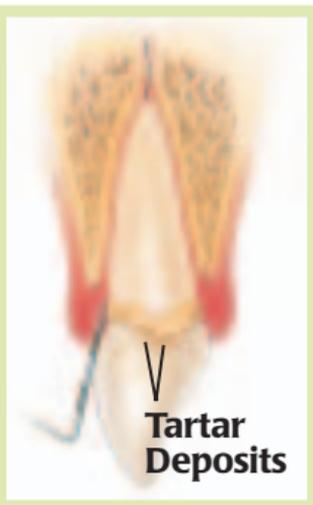
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# Pocket Depth Reduction

The main cause of periodontal disease is bacteria in the form of a sticky, colorless plaque that constantly forms on your teeth. However, many factors (see main brochure) can cause periodontal disease or influence its progression.

Your bone and gum tissue should fit snugly around your teeth like a turtleneck around your neck. When you have periodontal disease, this supporting tissue and bone is destroyed, forming "pockets" around the teeth.

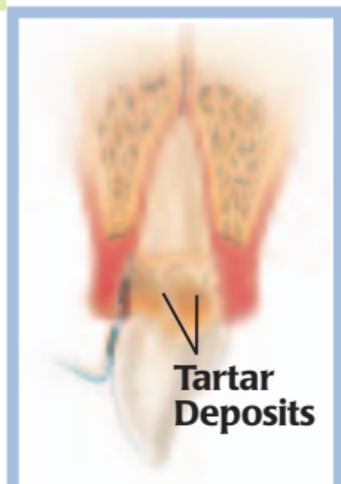
Over time, these pockets become deeper, providing a larger space for bacteria to live. As bacteria develop around the teeth, they can accumulate and advance under the gum tissue. These deep pockets collect even more bacteria, resulting in further bone and tissue loss. Eventually, too much bone is lost, and the teeth need to be extracted.



*figure 1.0  
mild periodontitis*

Your periodontist has measured the depth of your pocket(s) (see

figures 1.0 and 2.0). A pocket reduction procedure has been recommended



*figure 2.0  
moderate-advanced  
periodontitis*



because you have pockets that are too deep to clean with daily at-home oral hygiene and a professional care routine.

During this procedure, your periodontist folds back the gum tissue and removes the disease-causing bacteria before securing the tissue into place. In some cases, irregular surfaces of the damaged bone are smoothed to limit areas where disease-causing bacteria can hide. This allows the gum tissue to better reattach to healthy bone.

## What are the benefits of this procedure?

Reducing pocket depth and eliminating existing bacteria are important to prevent damage caused by the progression of periodontal disease and to maintain a healthy smile. Eliminating bacteria alone may not be sufficient to prevent disease recurrence.

Deeper pockets are more difficult for you and your dental care professional to clean, so it's important for you to reduce them. Reduced pockets and a combination of daily oral hygiene and professional maintenance care increase your chances of keeping your natural teeth — and decrease your chances of serious health problems (see main brochure) associated with periodontal disease.

# Soft Tissue Grafts

Periodontal procedures are available to stop further dental problems and gum recession, and/or to improve the esthetics of your gum line.

Exposed tooth roots are the result of gum recession. Perhaps you wish to enhance your smile by covering one or more of these roots that make your teeth appear too long (see figure 1.0). Or, maybe you're not bothered by the appearance of these areas, but you cringe because the exposed roots are sensitive to hot or cold foods and liquids.

Your gums may have receded for a variety of reasons, including aggressive tooth brushing or periodontal disease. You may not be in control of what caused the recession, but prior to treatment your periodontist will help you identify the factors contributing to the problem. Once these contributing factors are controlled, a soft tissue graft procedure will repair the defect and help to prevent additional recession and bone loss.

Soft tissue grafts can be used to cover roots or develop gum tissue which is absent

due to excessive gingival recession.



*figure 1.0*



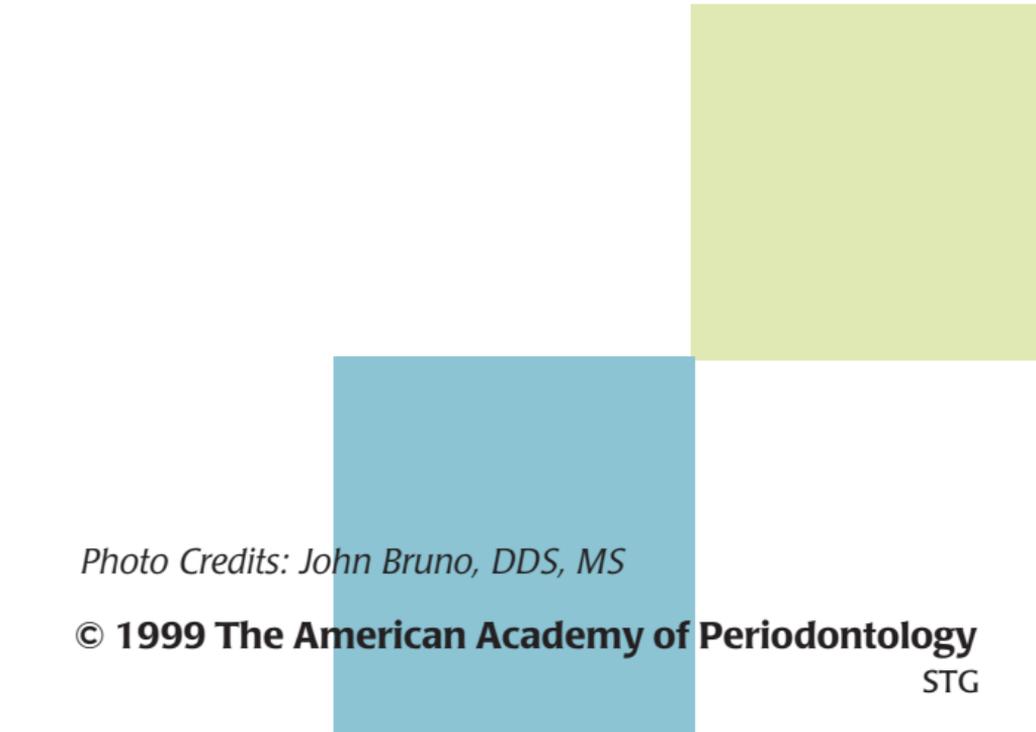
*figure 2.0*



During this procedure, your periodontist takes gum tissue from your palate or another donor source to cover the exposed root (see figure 2.0). This can be done for one tooth or several teeth to even your gum line and reduce sensitivity.

## What are the benefits of this procedure?

A soft tissue graft can reduce further recession and bone loss. In some cases, it can cover exposed roots to protect them from decay; this may reduce tooth sensitivity and improve esthetics of your smile. A beautiful new smile and improved periodontal health – your keys to smiling, eating and speaking with comfort and confidence.



*Photo Credits: John Bruno, DDS, MS*

# Socket Preservation

The goal of periodontal therapy is to save existing teeth and to replace missing teeth. During the course of treatment, however, your periodontist may identify hopeless teeth and other teeth requiring removal. Removing teeth (extracting) may be necessary because of pain, infection, or bone loss caused by periodontal disease, and/or to facilitate restorative treatment.

The bone that holds the tooth in place (the socket) is often damaged by disease and/or infection resulting in a jaw deformity when the tooth is extracted. These jaw deformities can create major



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*Figure 1.0  
Note the oversized and misshaped tooth restoration to compensate for the lost gum and bone.*

problems in performing restorative dentistry (see figure 1.0), whether your treatment plan involves dental implants, fixed bridges, removable dentures, or reshaping your gumline for a more pleasing smile. Jaw deformities from tooth removal can be

prevented and repaired by a procedure called socket preservation. Socket preservation can greatly improve your smile's appearance and increase your chances for successful dental implants and other restorations for years to come.



Several techniques can be used to preserve the bone and minimize bone loss adjacent to the socket. In one common technique, the tooth is removed and the socket and any associated deformity are then filled with bone or bone substitute, and may be covered with a bio-compatible barrier and/or treated with tissue-stimulating proteins to encourage your body's natural ability to repair itself by regenerating lost bone and tissue.

Finally, the gum is closed and healing is allowed to take place. Depending on your individual needs, the bone usually will be allowed to develop for about four to 12 months before your implant placement or restorative treatment can be completed. However, in some cases, temporary or provisional restorative care can be provided at the same time the tooth is extracted and the socket is preserved to maximize esthetics, comfort and function.

If your dentist or periodontist has recommended tooth removal, be sure to ask whether socket preservation is necessary to help you achieve your treatment goals and set the foundation for dental implants and restorations that will bring a happy, healthy smile for years to come.

