

## Five Millimetre Pocket Advice

During the course of regular check ups and hygienist appointments, one of the things we monitor is the depth of the gum 'pockets' around the teeth. You may recall the numbers being called out at your examination. Healthy gums have measurement of 3mm or less. Increasing pocket depths is an indication of the progress of gum disease or 'Pyorrhoea' where a loss of supporting bone is seen on x-rays. It is more serious when these measurements reach 5 mm. It is important that you realise that your mouth has reached this critical stage and it is vital home and professional care is increased. This is why you have been given this leaflet

Pocket depths tend to progress quite quickly from 5mm to 10 mm if not treated intensively. Teeth start to get loose at 5-6mm pockets. At 10mm a tooth is very loose and usually being extracted. You must now practise high quality brushing/flossing with tape/ bottle brushing, if you are to retain your teeth for any reasonable length of time.

*Although rather over-simplifying, you have three options:*

1. To continue as you are with simple regular hygienist appointments and check-ups with the dentist and accept the fact that the problem may eventually lead to loss of some teeth which are worst affected. This would include doing the best you can with the time you have available for brushing/ flossing etc.
2. To step up the level of commitment by you and the frequency of care by us in order to arrest the progress of your gum disease (it is rarely possible to grow back lost bone). We may use:-
  - More frequent visits, usually THREE hygienist visits per year.
  - Use of pocket medication where we place antibiotic gels into your gum pockets
  - Intensive home use of tape, manual and automatic toothbrushes, interdental bottle brushes, antibacterial toothpastes and mouthwashes e.g. Chlorhexidine.
  - Anti sulphur mouthwashes and toothpaste (especially to combat bad breath).
  - Scaling with local anaesthetic, occasionally with minor gum surgery.
3. Referral to a specialist dentist, called a periodontist, for more advanced gum disease and where more sophisticated types of surgery are necessary, or finally where the previous approach not been successful as we would like.

It is important for us to know how seriously you feel about your gum problem, because this is THE most common disease in the world today. It is treated very successfully by extracting all the teeth. This was the treatment, often advocated for previous generations.

# The Parkstone Dental Practice



35 Penn Hill Avenue,  
Lower Parkstone, Poole BH14 9LU  
01202 747545  
[info@parkstonedentalpractice.co.uk](mailto:info@parkstonedentalpractice.co.uk)  
[www.parkstonedentalpractice.co.uk](http://www.parkstonedentalpractice.co.uk)