

Gum Disease Treatment at Core Dental Carrum Downs

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Description:

Gum Disease Treatment at Core Dental Carrum Downs *Protecting the foundations of your smile — comprehensive gum disease diagnosis and treatment on Ballarto Road, Carrum Downs.* ## The Silent Threa...

Details:

Protecting the foundations of your smile — comprehensive gum disease diagnosis and treatment on Ballarto Road, Carrum Downs.

The Silent Threat to Your Teeth

Here's a statistic that surprises most people: gum disease, not tooth decay, is the leading cause of tooth loss in Australian adults. It affects roughly one in four Australians to some degree, and the majority of those affected don't realise they have it until significant damage has already occurred.

Gum disease — known clinically as periodontal disease — is called a "silent disease" for good reason. In its early stages, it can be virtually symptom-free. No pain. No visible swelling. Perhaps a bit of bleeding when you brush, which most people dismiss as normal. It's not normal. It's a warning sign.

At Core Dental Carrum Downs, we take gum health seriously. It's assessed at every check-up, and when we identify gum disease, we treat it proactively before it progresses to the point where teeth are at risk. For patients across Carrum Downs, Langwarrin, Frankston North, Skye, Cranbourne West, and the southern suburbs, our experienced team provides comprehensive gum disease assessment, treatment, and ongoing management.

What Is Gum Disease?

Gum disease is a bacterial infection of the tissues that surround and support your teeth — the gums, the periodontal ligament, and the underlying bone. It begins when bacterial plaque (the soft, sticky film that forms on teeth throughout the day) is not adequately removed through brushing and flossing.

Stage 1: Gingivitis (Early Gum Disease)

Gingivitis is the earliest stage of gum disease, and the good news is that it's entirely reversible with proper treatment and improved oral hygiene.

****What happens:**** Plaque builds up along the gumline, causing the gums to become inflamed. The bacteria in plaque produce toxins that irritate the gum tissue.

****Signs to watch for:**** - Gums that bleed when you brush or floss - Red or swollen gums (healthy gums are pink and firm) - Gums that look puffy or slightly swollen around the base of teeth - Persistent bad breath (halitosis) despite regular brushing - A metallic or unpleasant taste in the mouth

****The critical point:**** At the gingivitis stage, no permanent damage has been done. The bone and connective tissue that hold your teeth in place are not yet affected. With professional treatment and improved home care, gingivitis can be completely reversed.

Stage 2: Periodontitis (Advanced Gum Disease)

If gingivitis is left untreated, it can progress to periodontitis — a more serious condition where the damage extends below the gumline and begins to destroy the bone and connective tissue supporting the teeth.

****What happens:**** The gums begin to pull away from the teeth, forming "pockets" between the gum and tooth surface. These pockets collect bacteria and are difficult or impossible to clean with normal brushing. The bacterial infection progressively destroys the bone supporting the teeth.

****Signs of periodontitis:**** - All the signs of gingivitis, plus: - Gums that have receded (teeth appear longer) - Deep pockets between teeth and gums - Loose or shifting teeth - Changes in how your teeth fit together when you bite - Pus between teeth and gums - Persistent bad breath that doesn't improve with brushing - Pain when chewing

****The critical difference:**** Unlike gingivitis, the bone loss caused by periodontitis is not reversible. However, treatment can halt the progression, prevent further bone loss, and stabilise the condition. This is why early detection is so important — the sooner periodontitis is identified and treated, the more bone and tooth structure can be preserved.

Stage 3: Advanced Periodontitis

In the most severe cases, extensive bone loss leads to teeth becoming very loose or falling out entirely. At this stage, treatment options become more limited, and tooth extraction may become necessary. This is the outcome we work hard to prevent through early detection and proactive treatment.

Risk Factors for Gum Disease

While inadequate oral hygiene is the primary cause, several factors can increase your risk of developing gum disease:

- ****Smoking and tobacco use**** — the single most significant risk factor. Smokers are far more likely to develop gum disease and respond less well to treatment. - ****Diabetes**** — particularly when poorly controlled. Diabetes impairs the body's ability to fight infection, including gum infection. There's a two-way relationship: gum disease can also make it harder to control blood sugar levels. - ****Hormonal changes**** — pregnancy, puberty, and menopause can make gums more sensitive and more susceptible to gingivitis. - ****Medications**** — certain medications reduce saliva flow (dry mouth), which increases the risk of gum disease. Others can cause gum overgrowth. - ****Genetics**** — some people are genetically more susceptible to gum disease, even with good oral hygiene. - ****Stress**** — impairs the body's immune response and ability to fight infection. - ****Poor nutrition**** — particularly vitamin C deficiency. - ****Clenching or grinding teeth**** — excessive force on teeth can accelerate the breakdown of periodontal tissues. - ****Systemic conditions**** — including cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and respiratory diseases have been linked to gum disease.

The Gum Disease and General Health Connection

Research continues to reveal links between gum disease and broader health conditions. While the exact nature of these relationships is still being studied, the associations are well-established:

- ****Heart disease and stroke:**** People with gum disease have a higher risk of cardiovascular events. The chronic inflammation associated with periodontitis may contribute to arterial plaque formation. - ****Diabetes:**** The relationship is bidirectional — gum disease makes diabetes harder to control, and diabetes increases the risk and severity of gum disease. - ****Respiratory disease:**** Bacteria from the mouth can be aspirated into the lungs, potentially contributing to respiratory infections and pneumonia. - ****Pregnancy complications:**** Severe gum disease has been linked to preterm birth and low birth weight, though the causal relationship is still being investigated. - ****Rheumatoid arthritis:**** There appears to be a link between gum disease and rheumatoid arthritis, possibly through shared

inflammatory pathways.

This is why we view gum health not just as a dental concern but as a component of your overall health and wellbeing.

How We Diagnose Gum Disease

Gum disease assessment is an integral part of every check-up at Core Dental Carrum Downs. Our dentists use several methods to evaluate your gum health:

Visual Examination

Your dentist looks for visible signs of inflammation — redness, swelling, bleeding, and recession. They also assess the colour and texture of your gums (healthy gums are pink, firm, and stippled; diseased gums are red, puffy, and smooth).

Periodontal Probing

A small measuring instrument called a periodontal probe is gently inserted between the tooth and gum to measure the depth of the gum pockets. Healthy pockets are typically 1–3 mm deep. Pockets of 4 mm or deeper indicate gum disease and potential bone loss.

This measurement is recorded for each tooth at each visit, creating a record that tracks your gum health over time and allows us to detect changes early.

Digital X-rays

X-rays reveal the level of bone supporting your teeth. Bone loss is one of the hallmarks of periodontitis and is not visible during a clinical examination alone. Comparing X-rays over time shows whether bone loss is progressing or stable.

Assessment of Other Factors

We also assess tooth mobility, bleeding on probing, the presence of plaque and calculus, and any furcation involvement (bone loss between the roots of multi-rooted teeth).

Gum Disease Treatment Options

Treatment depends on the severity of the disease. Our goal is always to halt progression, eliminate infection, and create conditions for healing.

Professional Cleaning (for Gingivitis)

For early-stage gum disease (gingivitis), professional cleaning is often all that's needed, combined with improved home care. Our team will:

- Remove all plaque and tartar deposits above and below the gumline
- Polish tooth surfaces to discourage plaque accumulation
- Provide personalised oral hygiene instruction — proper brushing technique, flossing guidance, and recommendations for any additional tools (interdental brushes, water flossers, etc.)
- Schedule follow-up to monitor improvement

Most cases of gingivitis respond well to this approach, with gum health returning to normal within a few weeks of professional treatment and improved home care.

Scaling and Root Planing (Deep Cleaning)

For periodontitis, a more intensive form of cleaning called scaling and root planing is required. This is sometimes referred to as a "deep clean" and is performed under local anaesthesia for comfort.

****Scaling**** involves removing plaque and tartar deposits from below the gumline, within the periodontal pockets where regular brushing can't reach.

****Root planing**** smooths the root surfaces of the teeth, removing bacterial toxins and creating a clean, smooth surface that allows the gum tissue to reattach to the tooth root.

This treatment is typically performed over two to four appointments, treating one section of the mouth at a time. After treatment, the pockets should begin to shrink as the gums heal and reattach to the cleaned root surfaces.

Ongoing Maintenance (Supportive Periodontal Therapy)

After active treatment, ongoing maintenance is essential. Gum disease can be controlled but not cured — once you've had periodontitis, you're more susceptible to recurrence. We typically recommend maintenance visits every three to four months rather than the standard six-monthly intervals.

These maintenance visits include: - Periodontal probing to monitor pocket depths - Professional cleaning with attention to any areas of recurrence - Assessment of home care and any adjustments needed - Early intervention if any pockets are deepening

Specialist Referral

For advanced cases that require surgical intervention — such as flap surgery, bone grafting, or guided tissue regeneration — we can refer you to a periodontist (gum disease specialist) at the Smile Solutions Specialist Centre on Collins Street, Melbourne. As part of the Smile Solutions group, this referral is seamless, with your records transferring directly.

Gum Disease Prevention

Prevention is always better than treatment. Here's how to protect your gums:

Daily Home Care

- ****Brush twice daily**** for two minutes using a soft-bristled toothbrush (manual or electric) and fluoride toothpaste - ****Floss daily**** — this is non-negotiable. Brushing alone misses approximately 40% of tooth surfaces - ****Consider interdental brushes**** — for larger gaps between teeth, these can be even more effective than floss - ****Use a mouthwash**** — an antimicrobial mouthwash can help reduce bacterial load, particularly in areas that are hard to reach with brushing and flossing - ****Don't brush too hard**** — aggressive brushing can actually damage gums and accelerate recession

Lifestyle Factors

- ****Don't smoke**** — if you currently smoke, quitting is the single most impactful thing you can do for your gum health (and your overall health) - ****Manage diabetes**** — well-controlled blood sugar levels reduce the risk and severity of gum disease - ****Eat well**** — a balanced diet supports immune function and tissue healing - ****Manage stress**** — chronic stress impairs your immune system's ability to fight gum infection

Regular Professional Care

- ****Attend check-ups**** as recommended (every six months for most people, more frequently if you have a history of gum disease) - ****Don't skip professional cleans**** — even excellent brushers accumulate some tartar that only professional removal can address - ****Report symptoms promptly**** — if you notice bleeding, swelling, recession, or persistent bad breath between visits, call us

Frequently Asked Questions About Gum Disease

Can gum disease be cured?

Gingivitis (early gum disease) is fully reversible with professional treatment and improved home care. Periodontitis (advanced gum disease) can be effectively controlled and stabilised, but the bone loss it causes cannot be reversed. This is why early detection is so critical — the earlier we catch gum

disease, the more bone and tooth structure we can preserve.

My gums bleed when I brush — is that normal?

No. Bleeding gums are one of the earliest and most common signs of gum disease. Healthy gums don't bleed when brushed (assuming you're not using excessive force with a hard-bristled brush). If your gums bleed regularly when you brush or floss, it's time for a professional assessment.

How long does gum disease treatment take?

For gingivitis, improvement is often noticeable within a few weeks of professional cleaning and improved home care. For periodontitis, scaling and root planing treatment typically involves two to four appointments over several weeks, followed by ongoing maintenance visits every three to four months. Gum disease management is a long-term commitment, not a one-off fix.

Is gum disease treatment painful?

Scaling and root planing (deep cleaning) is performed under local anaesthesia, so the treatment itself is pain-free. After the anaesthesia wears off, some tenderness and sensitivity is normal for a few days. Most patients find the discomfort very manageable with over-the-counter pain relief.

I don't have any symptoms — could I still have gum disease?

Absolutely. Gum disease is called a "silent disease" for precisely this reason. Many patients with significant gum disease have no symptoms at all — no pain, no visible swelling, no obvious problems. This is why regular dental check-ups with periodontal assessment are so important. Professional examination can detect gum disease long before you'd notice anything yourself.

Book Your Gum Health Assessment

Whether you've noticed symptoms that concern you or simply want a thorough assessment of your gum health, we're here to help. Early detection makes all the difference with gum disease — the sooner it's identified, the simpler and more effective treatment is.

****Core Dental Carrum Downs**** 335 Ballarto Rd, Carrum Downs VIC 3201

****Phone:**** (03) 8373 1555 ****National:**** 13 13 16 ****Email:**** carrumdowns@coredental.com.au

****Hours:**** Monday – Friday: 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Saturday: 8:00 am – 1:30 pm Sunday: Closed

Ground-floor, fully disability accessible. Ample on-site parking. All health funds accepted with HICAPS on-site. Interest-free payment plans through Payright.

Healthy gums, healthy smile. Comprehensive gum disease care at Core Dental Carrum Downs.