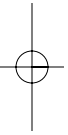


## PART I

# ABOUT GUM DISEASE

Part I will describe gum disease and its onset. In these chapters, you will get a new and broader understanding of your mouth and how it is a mirror of your body. Stress, fear, and pain are major causes of gum disease, and in Part I, healing modalities will be discussed on how to reduce stress, pain, and fear.

Read on, and you will be delighted to see that the mouth is connected to the total body. You will begin to *reverse gum disease naturally!*



# 1

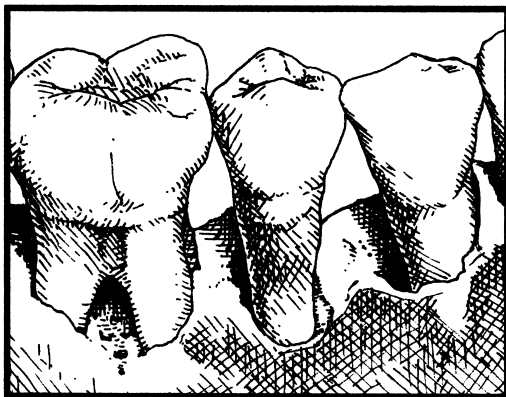
## **Gum Disease**

### *Its Signs, and the First Steps Toward Healing*

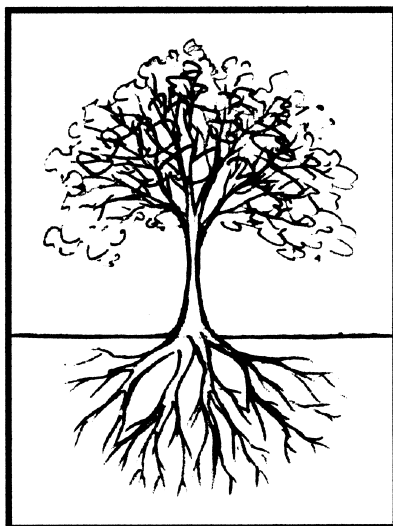
#### **Understanding Gum Disease**

With increased awareness of periodontal disease and a greater selection of dental hygiene products available, why is gum disease the most commonly diagnosed health problem among today's American adult population, affecting approximately 40 million people? Since this disease of the mouth has a destructive nature, it is important that you follow the guidelines described in this book to help begin the healing process. People have been losing their teeth as part of the aging process; however, with routine cleanings and good home care, we can all keep our natural teeth. If you exercise preventive care, it is not unreasonable to expect your teeth and gums to last a lifetime.

To understand gum disease in simple terms, think of your teeth rooted in bone the way a plant is rooted in soil. If the soil supporting the plant begins to erode, the plant will



Tooth rooted in bone.



Plant rooted in soil.

## Gum Disease

loosen and bend. The same thing can happen with your teeth. If the bone that supports the teeth in their sockets begins to erode, the teeth will loosen and fall out.

The first stage of periodontal disease is called *gingivitis*: *gingiv* (gum tissue) and *itis* (inflammation). This initial stage is characterized by loose, swollen, tender, and/or bleeding gums. The loose, flabby gum tissue allows pockets to form between the teeth and the gum tissue—pockets in which food debris can collect and harmful bacteria can multiply. The bacteria may then attack the neighboring jawbone, causing it to erode. When bone loss has occurred, the disease has progressed to the second stage. This is known as *periodontitis*, and is classified as early, moderate, or advanced, depending on the degree of bone destruction.

What causes gingivitis? Gingivitis is a bacterial infection of the gum tissue. Bacteria live in plaque, a sticky film that accumulates on your teeth every day. Plaque needs to be removed by proper oral home care. If it is not removed properly, the toxins in the plaque will cause the gums to get irritated and infected. Plaque left on the teeth and not disrupted by brushing and flossing will calcify and turn into *calculus* (commonly called “tartar”). Brushing and flossing cannot remove calculus; it must be removed by a professional. Calculus found caked on the roots of diseased teeth, in addition to containing bacterial toxins, is a mechanical irritant to the soft tissue.

## Signs of Disease

There are many signs that indicate the presence of gum disease. They can include:

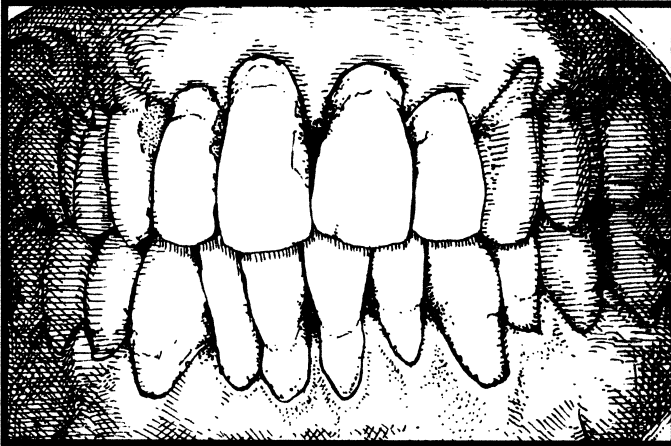
### Reversing Gum Disease Naturally

- **Halitosis, or bad breath.** An end product of this disease process and tissue breakdown is very often mouth malodor, or *halitosis*, commonly called “bad breath.” Although halitosis is a common symptom of periodontal disease, it may be caused by other health problems or conditions as well, such as gastritis (acid stomach). If your breath is sour in the morning, it might be due to dehydration or loss of saliva during sleep. And certain allergies can leave a bacterial mucous that mixes with your saliva and causes bad breath. Many medications also have side effects that can leave you with bad breath. Therefore, you should seek out a professional for a diagnosis of what is causing the halitosis.

However, to determine if you have halitosis, cup your hands over your mouth and breathe out. Then smell. If you detect an odor, then you probably have bad breath. Or ask your spouse or a close friend to inform you if you have this problem. To determine if the halitosis is originating from your mouth, try smelling your dental floss after you have used it. If the floss has a foul odor, the halitosis is probably emanating from your teeth and gums.

- **Malpositioned teeth.** Another warning sign of periodontal disease is loose and malpositioned teeth. Teeth will move out of place due to bone loss. If your teeth are moving out of position and seem to overlap, or if gaps are forming between your teeth, this may be a warning sign that you have gum disease. There are other reasons for loose teeth, such as a fractured root, so do seek a professional to obtain a proper diagnosis. Do not try to diagnose the condition yourself!

## Gum Disease



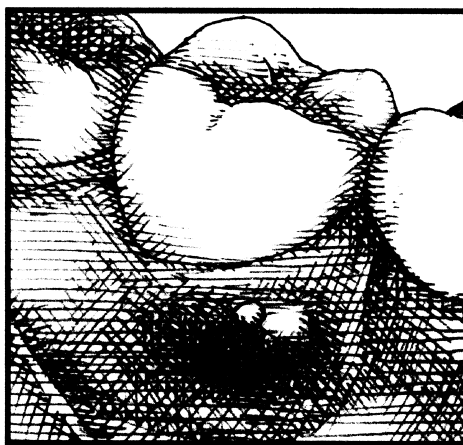
Receding gums.

- **Receding gums.** Have you ever heard the expression, “long in the tooth”? This is used to describe receding gums, or gums that are “backing away” from the teeth. The condition is the result of gum and bone loss and subsequent root exposure, thus giving the tooth a longer appearance. Sensitivity can occur as well, because the root does not have an enamel covering. Enamel covers the crowns of your teeth and acts as a protective covering.
- **Bleeding gums.** Do your gums bleed when you brush your teeth? Bleeding around your gums is an important indication of periodontal disease and is often the first sign you may notice. Bleeding, as well as inflammation and irritation of the gums, may also signal other medical problems, so do not ignore these signs. Seek a professional opinion. Such bleeding also can be a result of

### Reversing Gum Disease Naturally

the gum tissue drying out. This can occur if you wear braces or have other problems that keep your lips from closing over your teeth. Allergies may block the nasal passages, leaving you no choice but to breathe through your mouth. The result of mouth breathing, rather than breathing through your nose with your mouth closed, may be gingivitis. An open mouth can cause the tissue to dry out and become loose and irritated. Or, if you have allergies and your saliva has a lot of excess bacteria and mucous, the fragile gum tissue can become infected. People who suffer from postnasal drip have a great deal of mucus in the saliva, and this causes irritated gums.

- **Gum abscesses.** A gum abscess can be another sign of gum disease. If an area of your mouth appears to have a swelling or a lump above the tooth, then you may



Abscessed tooth.



## Gum Disease

well have a gum abscess. The invasive bacteria within the abscess will eat away at the supportive bone. The onset of gum disease can begin with just one abscess on one tooth. Bacteria will eat away at the bone surrounding the tooth, resulting in less support to the tooth and ultimately in tooth loss if not properly cared for. An abscess does not necessarily have pain associated with it, but you may have an additional problem originating in the nerve, which will cause pain.

Gum disease is insidious and can progress without your knowledge. Any early signs of this disease, as described above, need your immediate attention. If you lose bone, which roots your teeth into their sockets, your teeth will lack support and will loosen or fall out. Bone, ligaments, and gum tissue all support the positioning of the teeth. But diseased conditions of our body can be reversed as long as we do not deny that they exist.

## The History of Gum Disease

Luckily, many dentists have been true pioneers in the prevention of tooth loss and have helped create the techniques and instruments for scaling teeth that are used today.

Knowledge of gum disease dates back as far as 1746, when Dr. Pierre Fauchard, a surgeon-dentist who is known as the father of modern dentistry, wrote a paper titled *Le Chirurgien Dentiste* that described gum disease. Dr. Fauchard advised patients to wash out their mouths with tepid water after having cleaned their teeth. After they rinsed, he advised patients to rub the teeth from below

### Reversing Gum Disease Naturally

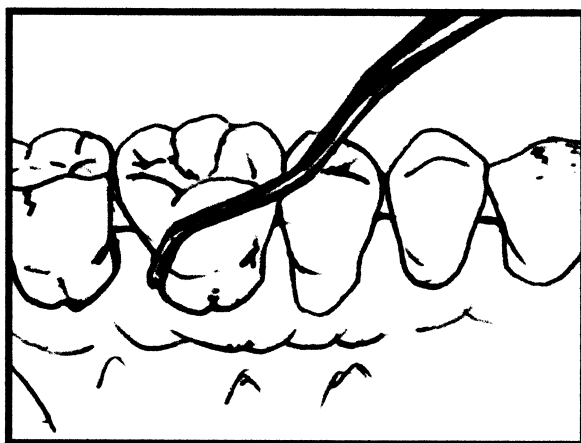
upward, and from above downward—outside and inside—with a little sponge dipped in water. He also claimed it was good to use a half-round toothpick to remove what he called the “fur” that collects on or between the teeth and gums during the night. His advice to remove this sticky film with a toothpick was very advanced for his time, and his ideas pre-saged today’s use of picks to scale teeth.

In 1845 Dr. John Hankey Riggs was the first to call attention to gum disease in America. Periodontal disease thus became known as “Riggs disease.” Few professionals currently refer to gum disease as Riggs disease, however. Today’s terms are: gum disease, periodontal disease, or gingivitis. My own approach is much the same as his: to treat the condition as a curable disease by cleaning the pockets surrounding the teeth. With a thorough cleaning, the bacteria and toxins are removed from between the teeth and surrounding bone, thus reversing gum disease.

Dr. Riggs is given credit for designing scalers and curettes—instruments that we still use today to remove the hardened stone (tartar) from the roots of our teeth and the diseased layer of granular (thickened diseased tissue) that sits next to the tartar. The roots of our teeth are not straight up and down, but curve at angles under the gum tissue. Thus the scalers and curettes were designed with contra-angles (curved angles) to conform to the roots and remove any material in the pockets. A dental cleaning using these instruments is the most important preventive treatment for periodontal disease.

One of the first dentists in America to establish a *preventive* dental practice was Dr. David Smith of Philadelphia in 1894. Prophylactic services (cleaning of teeth), although

## Gum Disease



Clinical instrument with curved angles.

beneficial to patients, were time-consuming, and so reduced the amount of time dentists were able to allocate to restorative treatment. Thus there were fewer dentists back then who performed preventive care. Most were *restorative* dentists, who focused on fixing the nonregenerative enamel and dentin, the hardened materials of our teeth. Dr. Alfred C. Fones, another pioneer, believed that training auxiliary personnel to provide prophylactic care was an efficient solution to this problem. Dental hygiene thus can be traced back to Dr. Fones, as he felt there should be a separation between restorative care and gum disease, and he was the first to initiate a program for dental hygiene. A *dental hygienist* is a licensed professional who cleans away the tartar (hardened plaque) from the teeth and roots under the gums. Dr. Fones created a school for dental hygiene in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1898.

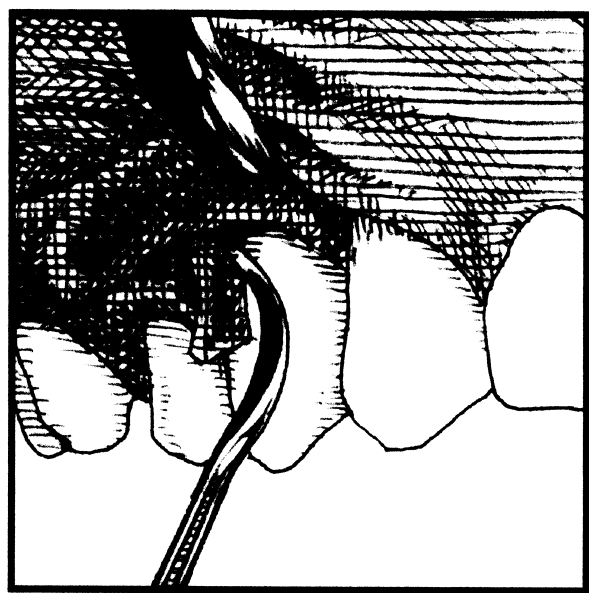
### Reversing Gum Disease Naturally

It was understood even then that not enough emphasis was put on educating children and teaching them the importance of proper oral hygiene. It was known as far back as 1898 that a clean tooth would not decay. So dental hygiene became an important profession in helping adults and children prevent adult tooth decay and tooth loss. The dental hygienist would clean teeth, educate and motivate the patients in home care, and then recommend treatment for restorative care by the dentist. The dental hygienist's role was an important one—even more than it is today—for there were fewer dentists at that time.

In 1939 Dr. A. W. Byran tried to make the dental profession aware of causative factors in gum disease and attempted to have the profession focus on prevention and diagnosis, rather than only on the symptoms of the disease. He argued against drug treatment, maintaining that unless the drugs were directed at a specific site of infection, they were not treating the condition scientifically. He was also against the surgical removal of unattached tissue because it did not address the cause and only dealt with symptoms.

Dr. Byran and Dr. Riggs had more insight into the subject of the reversal of gum disease naturally than many gum specialists (periodontists) do today, as cutting away at diseased and unattached tissue is still widely practiced. While surgical removal of gum tissue instantly shrinks the pocket collecting bacteria, the tissue remains thinner at a higher point on the tooth. And if the periodontist does not address the cause and motivate the person to practice proper home care and oral hygiene, the condition can appear again and cause breakdown in a more vulnerable area.

## Gum Disease



Surgical removal of a pocket.

### **The Natural Process of Healing: How It Begins**

The natural reversal process of gum disease starts with proper instrumentation in the dental office. If you have gum disease, the first step is to go to a dentist's office for a cleaning. Dental hygienists and dentists are trained specifically to treat the gums and provide proper cleanings to help eliminate the hardened material or tartar that attaches to the tooth and root structure. It is important for the hygienist or the dentist to do a thorough cleaning and to work with hand instruments (see chapter 6) for these

### Reversing Gum Disease Naturally

procedures. Many offices today rely on high-tech equipment such as the ultrasonic scaler and the Prophy Jet. But focused therapeutic healing can also come from the practitioner, traveling through the hands, through the instruments, and into the patient's mouth. High-tech instruments, such as the sonic scaler (high-speed ultrasonic tartar remover), can be an obstacle to this kind of healing. (Therapeutic healing will be discussed in chapter 6.)

Your mouth may require more than one cleaning; it all depends on the severity of your condition. If your mouth is in the second or third stage of periodontal disease, then you might have to return for three or four treatments. A return for maintenance can be as frequent as four or five times a year. After a root planing treatment (a cleaning of the roots so that healing can take place), the tissue will begin to reattach to the root and return to a healthy state. After the removal of tartar, you can use a natural process at home to heal the tissue (this will be discussed in chapter 9). This is equally as important as getting a thorough professional cleaning. Proper home care can help speed up the results of the gum treatments that are done in the dental office.

After you have root planing and scaling in the dentist's office, you will discover that your gum tissue will be sore and fragile. So go home and use distilled warm water with sea salt or an herbal rinse, preferably Dr. Vogel's Bioforce (Dentaforce), to enable the tissue to heal. Rinse your mouth frequently and also massage the tissue with a soft brush. Such soreness tells us it is important to work in a slow and careful fashion. You would not beat up on a wound that was raw and new. So keep in mind that all healing is a gentle process and takes time.

## Gum Disease

These are the six steps that will happen when you go in for a holistic cleaning or gum treatment.

1. The dentist or periodontist reviews the patient's condition and charts the pockets with a periodontal probe (Pockets over 4 mm are considered a prerequisite for gum disease.) Charting of the teeth allows professionals to make note of their evaluation of your mouth. They will also document crowns and bridges, missing teeth, teeth that show broken fillings, and teeth that have decay and need fillings or root canals.
2. The dentist suggests a treatment plan. Since everyone heals differently, it may take longer for some people, and they may need several appointments.
3. The professional provides cleanings, preferably with hand instrumentation. Ideally, an instrument is dipped in oreganol (oil of oregano), olive oil, or clove oil, and then in echinacea toothpaste or another natural toothpaste. The oreganol or clove oil acts as a lubricant and natural numbing agent. The echinacea or natural toothpaste feeds the new cells of the gum.
4. The patient uses a rinse, preferably herbal, to rid the mouth of disease.
5. The professional conducts a brush massage of the gums to soothe the irritated tissue and teach the patient the therapeutic methods of massaging the gums. At this point, the patient rinses again.
6. The professional provides a review of home care instruction. The patient is often given a package that usually contains toothpaste (herbal or baking soda is preferred) for cleansing and healing of the tissue,

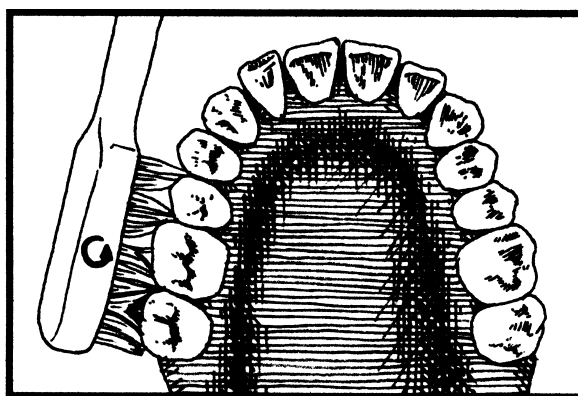
## Reversing Gum Disease Naturally

mouth rinse, toothbrush, and perhaps selected herbal products. The professional then advises the patient on how to start caring for the gums at home.

### How to Start Caring for Your Gums at Home

Gum tissue is connected to the bone by fibers. You can achieve reattachment of these gum fibers by using a gentle massaging stroke with a soft brush. So, using the side of a small-headed, soft toothbrush that has a dab of herbal toothpaste on it, gently massage the tissue with a shimmying side-to-side stroke.

Such massage stimulates circulation, which aids healing in the gum tissue. Using a massage stroke with a soft brush will help you bring the healing blood cells of the gums to the surface. It is the healing cells of the gums that will help to reattach gum tissue to the tooth. Think of the skin on your



Brush massage.



## Gum Disease

face. If you massage the skin on your face and create more circulation, then you are more likely to get a healthier and tighter appearance to your skin. The gum tissue is similar to the skin on your face in that both need proper products and massage. In Chinese medicine, natural blood-building tonics such as dong quai improve circulation. This can bring a healthy blood flow and stimulation to the gum tissue, and balance the female hormonal chemistry, which has a direct correlation to the health of our gum tissue.

If the gum tissue feels too sore when you first practice brush massage, then just proceed by rinsing frequently. In a day or two, when the tissue heals, you can begin massaging the gums again in order to bring the healing blood cells to the surface.

Do not rush the process, or you will irritate the gums and cause more harm than good. If your gums bleed and you are frightened to work on them because you think you may make the condition worse, seek the advice of a professional. Bleeding gums can be a sign that there is disease still present. However, with a gentle massage, the healing blood cells generally will surface to start reversing the disease naturally. Salt water and herbal rinses will help soothe any irritated tissue. Also, start taking a multiple vitamin B complex daily along with vitamin C. This will help in the natural healing process of your gums. If you feel you are under a lot of stress (which is a major cause of gum disease), take a multiple vitamin with zinc. Keep the gum pockets clean and gently floss. If you find that flossing is too hard at this point and causes pain, then work only with oral rinses of herbs and salt. In a few days, when your gums feel stronger, you can return to flossing.

### Reversing Gum Disease Naturally

As your mouth continues to recover from the treatment it received in the dental office, recognize that the foods you eat after root planing should not be too hot or too cold. Think of your gums as you would your skin: if you were to put ice or a hot substance on your skin, you would then notice irritation. The same condition can arise in your mouth. Another important suggestion is to stay away from spices when you are trying to heal your gum tissue. If you had a wound on your hand, you would not apply spices to the surface of the wound. The same applies to your gums. So it is best to eat bland foods while your gums are healing.

Miso (Japanese soy) soup is very soothing to the gum tissue, and you can feel the effects after drinking it. Avoid eating fruit with a lot of vitamin C after gum treatments. While the fruit may provide the proper nutrients to strengthen the gum tissue, the acids from the juices that come in direct contact with the gums may irritate the healing tissue. Juices that are very acidic, such as orange or grapefruit, are not recommended immediately after a cleaning. Biting into an orange or other citrus fruit will irritate the gum tissue. Also, try to stay away from hard nuts and candy. Candy and sugar turn to acid in the mouth, and this will irritate the gum tissue. After a few days, if you want orange juice, sip the juice through a straw.

Such nurturing of the tissue will accelerate the reattachment of the gum fibers to the tooth. The soreness and pain should lessen with time. Pain in the gum tissue feels like a dull ache and will diminish in a day or two after a professional scaling and root planing. Healing is a natural process that can be accelerated through the power of positive thoughts. If you are confident and understand the natural

## Gum Disease

process of healing that is taking place in your mouth, then you will achieve faster results.

Follow these other guidelines:

- ***Sleep well:*** Sleep will allow the immune system to be restored.
- ***Eat a proper diet:*** Food plays an important role in healing the mouth and body.
- ***Use vitamin therapy:*** Vitamin B complex with C and magnesium is helpful; always remember, diet is most important.
- ***Drink soothing liquids:*** Foods that heal include miso soup and chicken soup.
- ***Rinse frequently:*** Sea salt and herbal rinses soothe the gum tissue.
- ***Massage the gum tissue:*** Use an herbal toothpaste—herbs soothe the gum tissue and nurture new cells.
- ***Oxygenate:*** Breathe deeply—take in lots of oxygen.
- ***Think positively:*** Mind over matter—the mind operates the healing process.

