



Patient Information Leaflet

Periodontal Surgery

Cork University Dental School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to explain what periodontal surgery involves and it contains answers to many frequently asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or if you would like further information, please ask us.

What is periodontal surgery?

Periodontal surgery is a minor surgical procedure carried out under local anaesthesia. It may be offered to you if non-surgical treatment is not sufficient to secure your gum health or it may be to replace or encourage the replacement of bone or gums around your teeth.

What types of surgery are there?

There are different surgical procedures to address specific problems and your dentist will discuss the most appropriate type of surgery for your situation with you. Please ask if there is anything you are not sure about.

How is the surgery carried out?

The surgery will be carried out under local anaesthesia.

- For surgery to improve your gum health, the gum is lifted back from the roots of your teeth and bone. The exposed roots are then cleaned to remove all the tartar and infected tissue.
- For surgery to replace or encourage the replacement of bone or gums around your teeth, membranes/filters, gum/bone grafts or tissue stimulating proteins can be used to encourage your body's natural ability to regenerate bone.

In all types of surgery, your gum is then replaced and held in place with stitches. You will usually be seen approximately one week later to have the stitches removed. Removing your stitches is a simple procedure that does not require local anaesthetic. Very occasionally it can cause mild discomfort.

The outcome is dependent on your ability to keep your mouth clean. If you are a smoker, this is likely to have adversely affected your gum problem and may also affect the treatment outcome.

Success rates vary and are dependent on which factors have contributed to your gum disease/problem. The predictability of your treatment will be discussed with you by the clinician undertaking the treatment prior to the procedure.

Studies have shown that patients who undergo surgery, but do not continue the regular maintenance care or cannot keep their cleaning to an excellent standard have a higher risk of the disease recurring.

What are the risks involved with this procedure?

The risks associated with periodontal surgery include, but are not limited to:

- Pain and discomfort during and after surgery
- Damage to adjacent teeth and structures
- Temporary loosening of teeth
- Altered sensation/numbness if the nerves in the region are stretched or damaged. This may be temporary or permanent
- Post-operative pain, swelling, bruising, bleeding and infection
- Post-operative sensitivity of teeth at the surgical site is a common problem but this usually settles in a matter of weeks
- If membranes/filters, gum/bone grafts are used, these can become infected and lead to failure of the procedure

As the gum heals it will shrink back further. If there is a filling or crown on your tooth the margin of the filling or crown will become visible in your mouth. The gum shrinkage will reveal more of the root of the tooth and may cause sensitivity to hot, cold or sweet food/drinks.

This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients/>