

RECESSION OF THE GUM TISSUE

In the course of treatment, gum recession may be encountered. Gum recession occurs to a very small percentage, however, there are instances that it may occur; vertical movement of a tooth into the dental arch or in the alignment of the lower incisors. If there is an apparent risk, then very light arch wires are used and the treatment is extended to safeguard any potential recession of the gum tissue. This allows for the gum tissue and bone to keep up with the tooth movement.

A system of categorizing risk for recession has been evolved in the United States. A patient's condition can be identified as thin bone or thick bone overlying the roots of the teeth, and thin gum tissue or thick gum tissue overlying the bone. The best combination for lowest risk is the combination of thick gum tissue and thick bone. The greatest risk is thin bone and thin gum tissue.

Another related factor is treatment known as expand-odontics. This may include overzealous non-extraction treatment placing the roots of all teeth into thinner bone and gum tissue due to arch expansion. This is a treatment we try our best to avoid.

Gum recession may also occur due to lip and tongue piercing. The passive pressure of a hard metal or glass fixture pressing or rubbing against the gum tissue may produce recession over time. This risk will be identified and you will be advised accordingly.

Toothbrush induced gum recession may also occur as a result of the abrasive action from unpolished bristles, firm bristle structure or from abrasive dentifrice or toothpaste. It is always recommended to use better quality toothbrushes with softer polished/round bristles. It is also advised to be careful not to brush away the gum tissue overlying the roots of the eye teeth, as these teeth, at the corner or transition of the dental arch always tend to be at a greater risk due to the extra brushing pressure that may be applied.

Grinding, clenching and bruxing of your teeth may also contribute to recession.

In the event that recession does occur, a referral will be made through our office or your family dentist to a periodontist for a consultation regarding a graft of tougher/firmer tissue to reduce the risk of future recession.