



GERBER DENTAL GROUP
BURLEIGH HEADS

Oral Health for Seniors

Let's take a look at:-

- General oral health care.
- Gum and periodontal disease.
- Implants, dentures and bridges.
- Replacing old fillings and stabilizing teeth.
- Medications and lifestyle.

At Gerber Dental Group we encourage "dental care for life" and we believe it's never too late to start taking care of your oral health.

Current research suggests that when the mouth is unhealthy, general health and wellbeing suffer as a result. So read on to discover what tips, tricks and various options are available to maintain, or gain a beautiful, healthy smile!



Where bacteria, food and debris are not effectively removed, the gums (gingiva) can become inflamed, red and swollen. This can be sore or uncomfortable to eat and function and gum bleeding can occur. There are different stages in poor gum health, gingivitis or periodontitis (gum disease).

Gingivitis is a reversible form of gum disease caused by the presence of plaque (soft build-up) which contains nasty, harmful bacteria. This results in the inflammation and tenderness of the gums, bad breath, and bleeding when brushing or flossing. It can lead to more severe dental diseases and can escalate to periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease is the inflammation and break down of the gums, bone and tissues which maintain the stability of the teeth. The layer of gum tissue along the tooth becomes separated from the tooth, creating a small pocket where more bacteria can become trapped. This progresses and eventually leads to instability and complete loss of the teeth as the bone breaks down.

It is important for periodontal disease to be detected early, and while it is irreversible, it can be managed with ongoing care and maintenance.

Caring for Teeth and Gums

The gums are the supporting structures for the teeth so when the health of the gums is jeopardized, the teeth also become compromised. The aim of oral hygiene is to ensure the teeth and gums are kept clean and free of bacteria, food and debris. It is important to ensure all five surfaces of each tooth are cleaned, including in between, and along the gum margin. This can be tricky when there are old fillings and crowns that are starting to breakdown. Catches and overhangs can trap food and bacteria and make cleaning very difficult. This in turn often leads to localized gum infection.



Daily Routine

- Brush teeth twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss or clean between teeth with inter-dental brushes.
- Rinse daily with an alcohol-free mouthwash.
- Use a remineralising (strengthening) agent.

Bridges...What are they?

A bridge is a "false" tooth attached to two anchor teeth at either side of the gap. The bridge can span one or more missing spaces, however it relies on the anchor teeth being sound and stable.

What does a bridge look like?

In most cases, the bridge unit will look like your own natural teeth and it is a great option for replacing a partial denture.



Caring for your new bridge...

Brush twice daily and floss before bedtime. Superfloss can be used to floss underneath the bridge.

Superfloss consists of three sections per strand: stiff floss, tufted section and floss section. Use the stiff section to access under bridge by passing it between the anchor tooth and the false tooth.



Implants & Implant-Supported Dentures

Keep your teeth in and eat what you want!!



Traditional Dentures

Missing teeth can be one of the most embarrassing problems for many people. Traditionally missing teeth were replaced with dentures or plates that can be ill-fitting or cause pain.

What are Implants?

Implants are designed to act as a "natural" tooth. The titanium screw replaces the root of the tooth and the crown replaces the tooth itself. They are fixed in place and are not removable. Once in place, an implant should last for life providing you look after it.

Implant-Supported Dentures

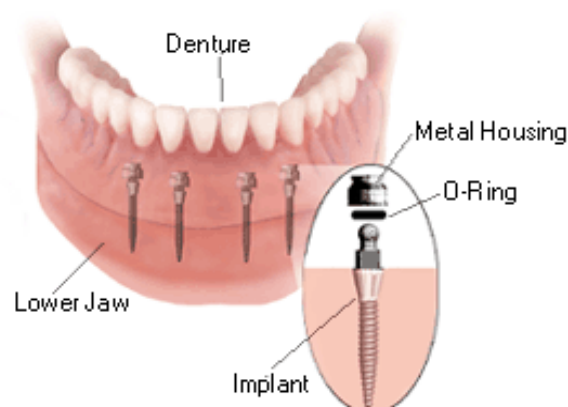
An implant-supported denture is a type of "over-denture" that is supported by, and attached to implants.

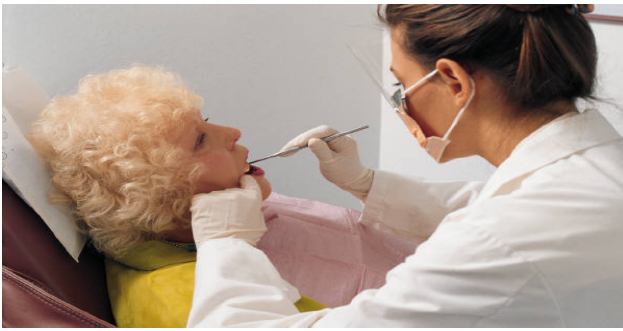
An implant-supported denture is used when a person doesn't have any teeth in the jaw, but has enough bone in the jaw to support implants. The implant-supported denture has special adaptors that snap onto attachments on the implant holding it firmly in place. This prevents it from moving around or slipping out of the mouth.

An implant supported denture can be made for either the upper or the lower jaw.

It will be more stable than a regular denture so you will find it easier to eat and speak and there is no risk of it falling out of your mouth.

The way to keep your denture stable permanently without the need for messy adhesives!!





Lifestyle & Medication

The ageing process does slow us down to some extent, but it shouldn't mean losing your teeth and it shouldn't mean putting up with painful or uncomfortable dental problems.

Regular dental examinations and preventive care visits will identify any problems early and not only allow you a choice of treatment options, but often also more budget friendly options.

A healthy diet low in sugar and high in fresh produce is not only beneficial for general health and well being, but also for good oral health. Watch those high sugar and acid drinks such as soft drink, cordials and sports drinks. Large amounts of tea or coffee with added sugar also plays havick with your dental health.

If you smoke, it is never too late to quit. Smoking increases your risk of gum disease, decay and tooth loss. The nicotine, tar and other chemicals in cigarettes builds up on the teeth, tongue, cheeks and gums and research shows that smoking is the leading cause of mouth and throat cancer. Even with good dental hygiene, smokers are still at risk.

Decreased saliva production is common as we age, however certain medications can speed up or interfere with this process and cause a dry mouth which in turn affects your oral health and makes you more susceptible to tooth decay and gum disease. Medications for heart conditions, allergies, depression, fluid retention, bladder problems and sedatives can all affect saliva production. It is important that you talk to you dentist about the medication you are taking because there are products available such as mouth rinses, Tooth Mousse and salivary substitutes that can be used.

People who suffer from osteoporosis or thinning of the bones are often prescribed a group of mediations called Bisphosphonates. While these medications are effective in slowing the bone thinning process, they can have serious implications for the jaw bone when teeth are extracted or when other invasive dental procedures are required. Patients taking bisphosphonates must discuss this with their dentist prior to having any dental treatment.

REPLACING OLD FILLINGS

Most filling materials are not designed to last forever and will all breakdown at some stage. Composite resin or white colored filling material starts to leak or chip after a few years, while silver amalgam material can cause the surrounding tooth structure to break or fracture around it. Old fillings should be checked regularly and replaced before they breakdown or damage the natural tooth structure. Failing fillings usually progress to decay or nerve damage, further compromising the tooth. While it is quite safe to use composite resin for small restorations, teeth with minimal natural tooth structure remaining or teeth that are "at risk" ideally need to be protected and stabilized with a crown. Remember, nothing is as good as your natural teeth, but we will do our best to give you the next best option.

Caring for your Dentures

- After all meals dentures should be rinsed with water to remove food debris.
- Brush dentures with a denture brush or soft toothbrush at least once daily. A gentle scrubbing action is used to remove plaque and food debris.
- Brush dentures with a mild hand soap or dishwashing liquid, not toothpaste as it is too abrasive.
- Rinse dentures to remove soap residue.
- Use a cotton tip or a cotton ball to polish the inside of the dentures.
- Soak dentures in a denture care soaking solution (such as Polident) or water any time you are not wearing them.
- To remove tricky stains dentures can be wiped over with a soft cloth and white vinegar.

