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Periodontists: Experts in a branch of Dentistry

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Periodontist is a dentist who specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of periodontal disease, and in the placement of dental implants. Periodontists are also experts in the treatment of oral inflammation. They are familiar with the latest techniques for diagnosing and treating periodontal disease, and are also trained in performing cosmetic periodontal procedures. Periodontists often treat more problematic periodontal cases, such as those with severe gum disease or a complex medical history. Periodontist usually reviews the patient's complete medical and dental histories. The periodontist examines the gums, checks to see if there is any gum line recession, assesses how the teeth fit together when biting, and checks the teeth to see if any are loose. The periodontist will also take a small measuring instrument called a probe and place it between the teeth and gums to determine the depth of those spaces, known as periodontal pockets; this helps the periodontist assess the health of the gums. X-rays may also be taken to observe the health of the bone below the gum line. Periodontists are experts in replacing missing teeth with dental implants.

Periodontal disease activity results in destruction of periodontal tissues. The principal objective of periodontal therapy is the morphological and functional reconstruction of lost periodontal supporting structure. Tissue regeneration, management of periodontal-endodontic lesions, and providing dental implants as tooth replacements are, when indicated, integral components of comprehensive periodontal therapy. The goals of periodontal therapy are to preserve the natural dentition, periodontium and peri-implant tissues; to maintain and improve periodontal and peri-implant health, comfort, esthetics, and function. Recently growth factor has been studied extensively in the regeneration of lost periodontal tissue. Growth factors are signal proteins released from local tissue or blood products that activate target cells to replicate or migrate. Growth factors are proteins that bind to receptors on the cell surface, with the primary result of activating cellular proliferation and/or differentiation. Growth factors trigger specific target cells by binding to their high affinity surface membrane receptors. The growth factors are needed for both development and regeneration, so it can be imagined that these factors that trigger development of periodontium may prove helpful in promoting regeneration of periodontal tissues. There are various growth factors present in the body, which influence periodontal regeneration.

Periodontal treatment may necessitate a greater understanding and increased level of expertise by a trained specialist. Patients who present with moderate or severe levels of periodontal disease, or patients with more complex cases, will be best managed by a partnership between the dentist and periodontist.

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