



DOCTOR'S COLUMN

LASER-ASSISTED GUM TREATMENT



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Millions of people suffer from gum disease every year, yet only a small percentage of them receives treatment. Gum disease has been linked to a variety of health complications, including heart disease, pancreatic cancer, diabetes and low birth-weight babies. Gum disease is widespread around the world and until recently the majority of the treatment options available included invasive surgery involving cutting the gum tissue down and suturing it back together or extracting the teeth and recommending dentures or dental implants. But now, patients do not have to fear or put off getting treatment. Patients have to suffer less pain and discomfort and have much better and more predictable long-term results.

LANAP (Laser Assisted New Attachment Procedure) is the first and only FDA cleared laser protocol on the market and has been proven through extensive science and research. Quite simply, it is the highest standard of care available in the world for the treatment for gum disease. Often teeth that have previously been deemed hopeless can be saved by naturally regenerating the bone around the tooth.

Gum disease is caused by bacteria that attack the areas of the gum and cause them to become inflamed and, ultimately, recede. Once the gums recede, the bacteria goes on to attack the bone around the teeth. If it is not treated, the bone structure around the teeth will degrade and the teeth will eventually fall out.

Once gum disease has set in, patients now can look forward to LANAP. This procedure is easily divided into four main stages.

- First, the dentist uses a specially designed probe to understand how deep the pockets of diseased tissue are.
- A laser is used to remove the diseased tissue and kill the bacteria.
- In the third stage, the dentist usually uses ultrasonics to remove debris from around the roots of the teeth.
- Finally, the dentist uses a laser to clean the pocket one final time.

This procedure causes the patient far less discomfort. The patient feels no pain during the procedure and there is no need for even local anaesthesia. One of the most significant advantages of the laser technique is that it kills the bacteria and also causes much less bleeding than with conventional approaches. There is also an aesthetic improvement with the LANAP technique as less of the gum is removed and more of the healthy tissue is