

Concord Dentist Touts Regenerative Procedures, Explores Oral-Heart Health Connection

Dr. Todd Sheffler of Caring Family Dentistry knows a healthy mouth helps keep the whole person healthy. Diagnosing and treating periodontal disease is one step in the right direction.

“A definite link exists between oral health and overall health. Researchers have known for years that half of all Americans are affected by periodontal disease and that people suffering from periodontal disease are twice as likely to have heart disease,” says Todd Sheffler, DDS, General Dentist and Founder of Caring Family Dentistry. “It’s unknown if the connection is causal or corollary, but we advocate that a healthy mouth is one line of defense against such systemic diseases.”

The serious infection that is the hallmark of periodontal disease (also referred to as gum disease) develops below the gum line. Bacteria then travels through the body via the bloodstream, potentially landing in the tissue of the heart, where it may play a role in the formation of the fatty plaques associated with heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes.

Periodontal Disease Diagnosis and Treatment

The signs of periodontal disease include bleeding gums, halitosis, loose teeth, and pain in the teeth and gums. Diagnosis is confirmed via measurement of the “pockets” between the tooth and gum. Pockets deeper than 4mm may be indicative of periodontal disease. X-rays also aid in diagnosis.

“One option for patients is to bury their heads in the sand, and ignore the infection,” Dr. Sheffler says. “The results will be loose or lost teeth, erosion of bone in the jaw, and possibly heart disease.”

Caught early, though, periodontal disease can usually be treated with scaling (in which tartar and bacteria are removed from tooth surfaces and from beneath the gum line) and root planing. An advanced infection, however, will require more advanced remedies; resective gum surgery and tissue or bone grafts are a few such procedures.

LANAP Periodontal Disease Treatment

The LANAP® protocol is Dr. Sheffler’s treatment of choice for anything other than early-stage infections. He describes the FDA-cleared laser surgery as “leaps and bounds beyond other treatments in terms of efficacy and comfort.” The procedure requires no cutting, and discomfort is minimal.

“The LANAP® protocol has a certain affinity for infected tissue,” he explains. “Placed in the gum pocket, it removes diseased tissue, cleans the root of the tooth, and stimulates the regeneration of previously diseased root surfaces, cementum, periodontal ligaments, and bone. It’s the only dental tool proven to produce true regeneration.”

A related procedure, LAPIP™ treatment, is used to rescue failing dental implants. As with the LANAP® protocol, LAPIP™ treatment is minimally invasive, with no cutting or sewing of the gums. It removes diseased tissue and bacteria and stimulates regeneration of bone. With both procedures, significant improvements may be observed after only a few weeks, and bone regeneration will continue for the next several years.

“My team and I care about your health—and not just your oral health,” Dr. Sheffler concludes. “We are dedicated to helping patients achieve the healthy smiles they deserve using the most innovative and pain-free options available.”

Whether you want to redesign your smile, make a subtle cosmetic enhancement, or obtain general dental care for yourself or your family, call and speak with Dr. Sheffler today!



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