



GOULD'S GUMS GAZETTE

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Welcome to our First Issue!

From time to time, newsworthy items come up in the field of periodontics and I thought this might be a useful way of passing the information on. I realize we all get too much information sent to us in one form or another, so I'll try to keep these newsletters brief and to the point!

Healthy Gums May Help Fight Alzheimer's disease

A recent study by Dr. Margaret Gatz of the University of Southern California shows that lifetime exposure to inflammation, including periodontal disease, may have a significant impact on the risk of developing Alzheimer's.

Researchers studied more than 100 sets of identical twins where one twin developed dementia and the other didn't. **They found that twins who had significant periodontal disease before they were 35 years old had a fivefold risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.**

Gatz was inspired to focus on inflammation by the work of USC gerontologists Caleb Finch and Eileen Crimmins, who published a paper in the journal Science, linking today's record life spans to lower rates of childhood

Infectious diseases, such as gum disease, flu, rheumatic fever, tuberculosis and other diseases.

Periodontal Disease May Shorten Your Life

Dr. Michael F. Roizen, in his book "Real Age - Are You as Young as You Can Be?" offers a systematic approach to calculating the aging effect of more than 100 health behaviours. These range from stress control to diet, medication and dental disease. **He cites studies that show that men under the age of 50 who have advanced periodontal disease are almost 3 times more likely to die prematurely and 3 times more likely to die from heart disease than those who have healthy teeth and gums, even including such factors as smoking, alcohol consumption and obesity.** In fact, periodontal disease and poor oral hygiene were stronger indicators of premature death than of coronary heart disease. Young men with poor oral hygiene were 3 to 4 times more likely to die sooner than those with good oral hygiene.

Dr. Roizen concluded that gum disease and tooth loss not only make you look older, your real age is actually 3.4 years older. Conversely, the absence of periodontal disease makes you 6.4 years younger than the median person.

An Alternative to Gingival Grafts?

Until relatively recently, the “gold standard” for gaining increased tissue thickness and root coverage in cases of gingival recession has been the **connective tissue graft**.



While this treatment usually works extremely well, there are two main disadvantages:

1. It requires a second surgical site on the palate, and some patients are uncomfortable or fearful of this prospect.
2. The patient's palate may have insufficient thickness to allow the harvest of sufficient graft tissue. Very often, the same patients who get recession because of having a “thin” periodontium also have a “thin” palate.

AlloDerm Grafting

AlloDerm is a sterile human connective tissue matrix that contains no blood and no cells. Therefore there is no risk of rejection or potential for disease transmission. **AlloDerm** has been shown in several clinical trials to be equivalent to palatal connective tissue for treating gingival recession, as can be seen in the following example.



Although **AlloDerm** adds somewhat to the cost compared to conventional grafting, it does avoid the potential complications, discomfort and fear that are sometimes associated with the use of the palate for donor tissue.

Both these procedures were performed with a microsurgical tunneling technique which eliminates the need for external incisions, and allows more rapid and comfortable healing.