

# Periodontal Plastic Surgery and Cosmetic Treatments



From the American Academy of Periodontology



Just as cosmetic surgery can help people improve their looks, several periodontal plastic surgery procedures are available to help enhance the aesthetics of your smile. The following are some common treatments.

## **Dental Implants**

A dental implant is an artificial tooth root that is placed into your jaw to hold a replacement tooth or bridge. Dental implants are the answer for many people with missing or damaged teeth, and they are a long-term solution that look, feel, and function just like natural teeth.

## **Root Coverage**

Root coverage procedures are often used to treat gums that have receded to the point that the roots of a tooth are exposed. During a root coverage procedure, your periodontist will take gum tissue from the roof of your mouth (known as the palate) to cover roots, develop gum tissue where needed, or make dental implants look more natural. In some cases, this procedure can cover exposed roots to protect them from decay or to prepare your teeth for orthodontic treatment.

## **Ridge Augmentation**

Ridge augmentation procedures are often performed to correct irregularities in the gums and jaw after a tooth extraction. A periodontist may also perform a ridge augmentation to prevent the jawbone from collapsing after a tooth extraction. A ridge augmentation may be needed to allow the placement of a properly sized dental implant.

## **Pocket-Depth Reduction**

Bone and gum tissue should fit snugly around the teeth. In cases of advanced periodontal disease, deep pockets can form in the spaces between the gum and tooth, providing a space for additional bacteria to fester and possibly cause further damage to gum tissue and bone. During a pocket depth reduction, a periodontist

clears the pockets of any bacteria and infection and retightens the gum tissue around the tooth.

## **Crown Lengthening**

Crown lengthening is a procedure where excess gum tissue is removed to expose more of the "crown," the white enamel-covered part of the tooth. This procedure is performed on patients who have a "gummy smile" in which the teeth appear too short or the gum line seems uneven. The procedure, which can be administered to one tooth or to enhance your entire smile, reshapes excess gum and bone tissues to expose more of the natural tooth.

## **Combination Procedures**

Sometimes, you may need a few of these procedures to build the framework for your perfect smile. Often, periodontal plastic surgery is used to lay the foundation for further cosmetic enhancements, such as orthodontic devices and veneers. A combination of periodontal procedures can result in a beautiful new smile and improved periodontal health.

## **Reducing Dental Anxiety**

Your periodontist may recommend conscious sedation to ensure that you are comfortable and relaxed during your procedure.

Conscious sedation uses medications that leave you conscious and pleasantly relaxed, yet free of fear, anxiety, and apprehension about undergoing dental treatment. It is different than general anesthesia (a controlled and reversible unconscious state in which you are unable to sense any pain), and it does not carry inherent risks. Ask your periodontist for more information about conscious sedation.