



Periodontal Therapy-Knowing What's Right For You

Are you confused about the recent news reports on using antibiotics instead of traditional therapy as a first line of defense for treating periodontal disease?

It's no wonder. Claims of magic bullet cures are becoming more frequent creating unnecessary controversy and most importantly, confusing patients. The American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) wants to help you understand your treatment options.

The AAP's treatment guidelines have always stressed that periodontal health should be achieved in the least invasive and most cost-effective manner. This is often accomplished through non-surgical periodontal treatment, including scaling and root planing (a careful cleaning of the root surfaces to remove plaque and tartar from deep periodontal pockets and to smooth the tooth root to remove bacterial toxins), followed by adjunctive therapy, such as antibiotics, as needed.

Most periodontists would agree that after scaling and root planing, many patients do not require further active treatment, including surgical therapy. In fact, surgery is reserved for those situations when non-surgical therapies have failed to achieve the desirable clinical outcome of periodontal health, and to repair damage to gum tissue and bone as a result of periodontal disease.

Another area of concern is antibiotic resistance. Bacteria and other microorganisms that cause infections are remarkably resilient and can develop ways to survive

drugs meant to kill or weaken them.

This *antibiotic resistance*, also known as *antimicrobial resistance* or *drug resistance*, is due largely to the increasing use of antibiotics.

The more antibiotics you take, the higher chance you have of becoming resistance to harmful bacteria.

Basically what the AAP is advising is that it's not a matter of either antibiotics or scaling and root planing, it's determining what is best for each individual patient!

Each patient responds to treatment differently and all

options should be considered before a treatment regimen is selected.

So, be sure to have a discussion with your dentist or periodontist about your treatment options today!



About Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotics are drugs that fight infections caused by bacteria. After their discovery in the 1940's, they transformed medical care and dramatically reduced illness and death from infectious diseases.

However, over time, the bacteria that antibiotics control have developed resistance to these drugs.

Each time you take an antibiotic unnecessarily or improperly, you increase your chance of developing drug-resistant bacteria. So it is really important to take antibiotics only when necessary.

Because of these resistant bacteria, some diseases that used to be easy to treat are now becoming nearly impossible to treat.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following to prevent antibiotic resistance:

1). Talk with your health care provider about antibiotic resistance.

2). Ask whether an antibiotic is likely to be beneficial for your illness.

3). Do not take an antibiotic for a viral infection like a cold or the flu.

4). Take the antibiotic until it is gone, even if you are feeling better.

5). Do not save some of your antibiotic for the next time you get sick.

6). Take an antibiotic exactly as the doctor tells you.

7). Do not take an antibiotic that is prescribed for someone else.

The American Academy of Periodontology Patient Page is a public service of the AAP and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of your personal periodontist. There may be variations in treatment that your periodontist will recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Call 1-800-FLOSS-EM for a free brochure on periodontal disease.

For more information visit www.perio.org