



## LANAP Protocol Patient Education

### Frequently Asked Questions – Gum Disease

#### What Is Gum Disease?

Gum disease begins when a film called plaque accumulates on the teeth and calcium from saliva hardens the plaque—this calcified plaque is called tartar or calculus. Certain types of germs that live in this plaque and calculus damage gum tissue. Your body tries to fight this infection with an inflammatory attack, sending white blood cells to the area to destroy the bacteria. This inflammation causes the tissue to bleed easily when you brush or floss. This stage of the condition is called **gingivitis**.

If the infection and inflammation persist the result is a chronic inflammatory condition where, in addition to the gums, ligament and bone around the teeth are destroyed—often with no symptoms. At this stage it is called **periodontitis**.

#### I feel fine. Why is it important to get my gum disease treated?

The health risks of gum disease go far beyond the loss of teeth. There is a connection between gum disease and a number of serious medical conditions. People with periodontal disease are almost twice as likely to suffer from coronary artery disease and have nearly twice the risk of having a fatal heart attack. Gum disease has also been linked to other health problems, including respiratory disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, certain cancers, heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis, erectile dysfunction, HPV, and pregnancy complications.

#### What are the symptoms of Gum Disease?

- Gums that are red, swollen, and bleed easily
- Gums that seem to have pulled away from the teeth
- Bad breath or halitosis
- Pus between your teeth and gums
- Teeth that seem to be loose or moving away from one another
- Change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
- Change in the way your partial denture or implant-supported restorations fit
- Or no symptoms at all!

## **Does it hurt?**

Although the procedure itself can be virtually painless, we may anesthetize the area for the patient's comfort. In this way we can precisely direct the laser for treatment. Post-procedure discomfort is typically minimal and of short duration.

## **What Are the Risk Factors for Gum Disease?**

Well known risk factors for periodontitis include genetics, stress, avoiding the dentist, no brushing or flossing, and some medical conditions. Smokers are significantly more likely to develop gum disease than non-smokers.

## **Frequently Asked Questions – the LANAP® protocol**

### **What is the LANAP® protocol?**

The LANAP protocol is a laser-based treatment for gum disease, that uses a very specific laser that targets the bacteria that causes gum disease. Fear of periodontal treatment is greatly reduced when patients find out no scalpel or sutures will be used. Patient friendly laser treatment gets patients to agree to the treatment they need and continue with the follow-up care that is prescribed. The LANAP protocol is the only surgical laser gum disease treatment that is FDA-cleared and supported with histological studies and clinical results.

Our office is one of the first in the area to offer the LANAP protocol for the treatment of gum disease/ periodontitis.

### **How does it work?**

Tartar, associated with inflamed and bleeding gums, is removed from the root surface of the tooth using an ultrasonic scaler and small instruments.

Then, a small amount of light energy from a laser is directed through a tiny fiber, which is gently placed between the gum and tooth. This light energy removes a tiny amount of diseased tissue and aids in reducing the bacteria associated with the disease. After the area is thoroughly cleaned, the body can heal the area naturally.

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### **How long does it take?**

Initial treatment is focused on scaling and the use of small instruments to remove the tartar. Then, the laser portion of the treatment is performed and normally only takes a few minutes. Depending on the severity of the patient's periodontal disease, treatment may be accomplished in one office visit or in

multiple visits. The estimated treatment time is reviewed with patients when we discuss their treatment plan.

### **Does this treatment cost more than traditional gum surgery?**

There are many factors which may affect the cost, such as the severity of the periodontal disease, and how many teeth are involved. Patients should discuss their payment options and costs with the dental office personnel.

The dramatically increased comfort for our patients made the new system attractive to our office. We do encourage patients to take care of the need now to reduce further damage to their gums, teeth and bone.

### **What to Expect: Your LANAP Surgery**

LANAP periodontal surgery is a full-mouth procedure usually completed in two 2-hour visits. We complete one side of the mouth during the first visit and complete the other side on the second visit. Surgeries are usually scheduled within one week of one another. It is common to quickly return to work or other activities.

### **What to Expect: The First Few Days**

You may experience mild aching, throbbing, and soreness of the treated areas for the first couple days—this can be helped with mild pain medications. The tissue around the teeth may appear discolored. Your bite may feel slightly different, but the teeth will adapt. You cannot brush or floss for the first 7-10 days after treatment, and you will need to follow a liquid or mushy diet. Smoking decreases results for all gum treatments, including LANAP.

### **What to Expect: Follow-up Care**

As the gums heal, the teeth will shift, and your bite will need to be adjusted several times over the coming months. Splints may be fabricated to stabilize and immobilize the teeth. It is important that you wear these splints as instructed to promote healing. Expect to have your teeth professionally cleaned every three months for at least the first year, and then as recommended by your dentist.

### **Who is a candidate for LANAP laser surgery?**

Patients with moderate-to-severe gum disease can especially benefit from the LANAP protocol. The LANAP protocol is also an excellent treatment option for patients who are fearful of conventional scalpel surgery and patients taking certain medications, such as blood thinners. With the LANAP protocol, patients do not have to stop taking any medications.

## What you can expect with LANAP® Laser Therapy

You have just been diagnosed with periodontal disease, commonly referred to as gum disease. Approximately 75% of the population struggles with this disease. We are excited to provide you with the latest method of treatment.

Dr. Radha Patel's primary concern is for your comfort and safety. We prescribe you to take antibiotics to prevent the possibility of infection and to take Motrin (ibuprofen) to control micro-inflammation and swelling. You will start taking both medications the day before surgery. Some patients may need to take Valium prior to the procedure – this is just to help you relax. If you choose to take Valium, a trusted friend or family member **MUST** drive you to and from our office.

The LANAP protocol is a relatively painless procedure. Most patients experience little to no discomfort. Depending on your individual pain tolerance, you can expect to return to work the day after surgery.

One of the contributing factors of periodontal disease is trauma from tooth to tooth contact; therefore, we will require you to sleep with a night guard. It may also be necessary to make adjustments to your teeth so that they all function equally (bite together with an even amount of force).

Periodontal disease is a chronic infection. The LANAP protocol is an excellent choice for treatment, but it is not a cure. **THERE IS NO CURE FOR PERIODONTAL DISEASE.** The goal of LANAP treatment is to reverse some of the effects of the disease and to help you maintain a healthy mouth.

**Your home care is very important.** We will make certain recommendations regarding your home care custom fit to your mouth. This may include an antibacterial mouth rinse, Sonicare toothbrush, and/or Waterpic. We cannot stress enough the importance of good daily hygiene habits. In addition, we will continue to schedule 3-month periodontal maintenance appointments with one of our hygienists.

By continuing this partnership, we will help you to treat this serious disease. Our goal is to assist you with obtaining the best care for your mouth and to preserve good overall health.