Gingival Recession- Why Do We Care?

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When a patient comes to us with a concern about exposed roots as a result of gingival recession, what is important or essential to communicate to them about their condition?

It is obvious that with a lack of gingival tissue, more root surface is available for plaque collection. As plaque accumulates, inflammation occurs along with edema. Then, a cycle is often perpetuated- our patients experience discomfort with effective plaque control, the inflammation and edema persist, and further recession occurs, particularly in thin phenotypes. Finally, as gingival tissues are lost, bone resorption follows.

All Cases By Dr. French

#27 at initial evaluation: plaque accumulation, significant erythema and edema

#27: 2 months post CTG: resolution of erythema and edema, less surface area available for plaque accumulation

#19-21 at initial evaluation: note loss of cementum, rolled gingival margins

#19-21: 2.5 years post CTG: note excellent root coverage, proper gingival contours

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#11-14 at initial evaluation: note extreme loss of cementum, furcation #14 exposed

#11-14: 2 years post CTG: note significant root coverage

Connective tissue grafting provides an extremely predictable method to rebuild lost gingival tissues. We can see the clear benefit of tissue grafting for our patients. All of these cases demonstrate root coverage, which in turn translates to *ROOT* and *BONE PROTECTION*. With our patients living longer, and often with more medications on board, we know our patients' risk for root caries only increases with time and age. In addition, the longer a root is exposed, the more susceptible it is to abrasion (from brushing) and erosion (from various beverages, systemic conditions such as GERD, etc), which often results in dentinal sensitivity, and in severe cases, the need for endodontic treatment. Let's counsel our patients to invest in their long-term oral health- when periodontal structures are lost to disease or trauma and can be repaired, let's provide our patients with those options.

References:

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