



What is peri-implantitis?

Peri-implantitis is a condition that affects the tissues surrounding dental implants. It is caused by the accumulation of plaque biofilm and is characterised by inflammation of the peri-implant tissues and a progressive loss of the supporting bone around the implant. Before peri-implantitis develops, a milder form of inflammation known as peri-implant mucositis may occur.

Peri-implant mucositis vs Peri-implantitis

- Peri-implant mucositis involves inflammation of the soft tissues around an implant without any bone loss.
- Peri-implantitis includes both inflammation and bone loss around the implant.

Research shows that peri-implant mucositis affects around 43-47% of people with dental implants, while peri-implantitis affects approximately 20-22%.

How is peri-implantitis diagnosed?

	Peri-implant health	Peri-implant mucositis	Peri-implantitis	Peri-implantitis (when previous examination data is not available)
Clinical signs of inflammation	✗	✓	✓	✓
Bleeding (BoP) and/ or suppuration on gentle probing	✗ or ✓ ≤1 BoPspot	✓ ≥2 BoP spots or ≥1 line/ profuse bleeding	✓	✓
Increase in probing pocket depth (PPD) compared to previous examinations	✗	✗ or ✓	✓	✓ PPD ≥6mm
Bone loss beyond the crestal bone changes resulting from initial bone remodelling	✗	✗	✓	✓ Bone level ≥3mm apical to the most coronal portion of the intra-osseous part of the implant

Peri-implantitis shares some similarities with periodontitis (irreversible gum disease), but it is important to understand that peri-implantitis can progress more rapidly and in an unpredictable, non-linear way. This means that bone loss can occur suddenly and at varying rates.

What causes peri-implantitis?

There are two primary causes:

- Poor plaque control
- Irregular attendance at maintenance (supportive peri-implant care) appointments

Other risk factors:

- A history of severe gum disease (periodontitis)
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Implants that are not placed in the optimal position
- Poorly designed implant restorations
- Lack of keratinised gum tissue around the implant

By maintaining good oral hygiene and attending regular maintenance appointments, the risk of developing peri-implantitis can be significantly reduced.

References

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