

PRESERVING TEETH THROUGH GINGIVAL GRAFTING

One of the significant benefits of gingival grafting is the addition of keratinized attached tissue. Attached gingiva is firm, resilient, and tightly bound to the underlying periosteum of alveolar bone. The facial aspect of the attached gingiva extends to the relatively loose and movable alveolar mucosa, from which it is demarcated by the muco-gingival junction. Mucosa has a weak attachment to the periosteum and is not as protective as keratinized attached tissue.



Pre-treatment photograph of teeth #25 and #27 show the following:

- 1) Gingival recession of 2- 4mm.
- 2) Very thin zone of attached tissue. The gingival attachment is not firm and therefore susceptible to continued recession. **The tissue is so thin that the root surfaces can be seen through the tissue.**

This puts the teeth at risk for continued periodontal deterioration and possible future loss.



Post-treatment photograph of teeth #25 and #27 show:

- 1) Improved root coverage and restoration of gingival tissues.
- 2) Increased zone of keratinized attached tissue has been created. The new thick tissue attaches firmly to the underlying root surface and jaw bone. This will insure stability by halting progressive deterioration.

The restoration of gingival tissues has improved the prognosis for tooth retention significantly.

CONCLUSION: The keratinized attached gingiva provides the periodontium with increased resistance to external injury, contributes to the stabilization of the gingival margin, and aids in dissipating physiological forces exerted by the muscular fibers of the alveolar mucosa on the gingival tissues. Increasing attached gingiva should be strongly considered in cases where there is 1mm or less attachment. A variety of methods are available to augment the attached gingiva. The newly obtained keratinized gingiva can be maintained for a life-time. In addition, these periodontal procedures can halt the progression of gingival recession.

This case report is provided by **PERIODONTICS OF THE DESERT: Peter Warshawsky, D.D.S. and Eric Driver, D.D.S.;** Board Certified Periodontists. It is meant as a way of sharing current periodontal information with the dental community. Questions and comments are welcomed by calling 674-4410.* All cases presented are actual patients of Drs. Warshawsky or Driver.