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Soft Tissue Laser



Lasers are relatively new to the field of orthodontics. In orthodontics, the type of laser that is used is specific for pigment – tissues that have color. The laser is generally used to speed orthodontics and to enhance the esthetic outcome of treatment.

Since the laser uses a beam of single wavelength light, it can be used with great care. The laser cuts with great precision, stops bleeding, and disinfects all at once. Because the laser is highly focused, adjacent tissue is minimally affected which reduces inflammation (compared to a scalpel) and permits rapid healing that is nearly painless.

PROCEDURE

First, a topical anesthetic jelly is applied to the gums. After a few minutes to allow for penetration, the topical jelly is wiped off and the area is numbed and ready for the laser. The procedure itself generally takes just a few minutes to complete. The numbness wears off after about a half hour. The lasered area is generally minimally tender. Sometimes patients will take Tylenol or Ibuprofen for comfort. There is no need for prescription pain medicine. On rare occasion, the topical anesthetic can irritate the gums causing some redness the day after the procedure.

The lasered area may look a little ragged the first day and may bleed a little when brushing. However, the most important thing for healing is to keep the area clean. After a few days, the area will be dramatically healed. Cleanliness determines healing time: keep the area clean and the gums heal very quickly (days).

USES

Lasers are used within orthodontics for the following purposes: facilitate ideal bracket positioning, exposure/uncovering of unerupted teeth, removal of excessive gum tissue, and for soft tissue frenectomies.