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Diode Lasers in Orthodontic Treatment

A diode laser can be used in a number of ways that benefit patients during orthodontic treatment. The application of the laser “vaporizes” excess tissue exposing more tooth surface for both esthetic and functional reasons.

Because gum tissue acts like a frame that provides an esthetic shape and form to teeth, lasers often are used to “sculpt” the gums around the teeth to improve the appearance of the patient’s smile. Sometimes a patient’s gums either start or become bulky and uneven during orthodontic treatment. In such instances a laser can be used to remove the excess tissue. This exposes more of the tooth and makes the smile appear more balanced.

It is sometimes necessary to expose more tooth surface to aid in the placement of braces. One of the goals of the doctor is to place the bracket in the ideal position on the tooth. If the tooth is still partially covered by gum tissue, such placement is often impossible making treatment less efficient. In these instances, a diode laser can be used to remove the excess gum tissue that is the result of insufficient tooth eruption, short tooth length, poor oral hygiene, or mouth breathing. Often by sculpting the tissue surrounding these teeth, the patient’s orthodontic treatment can be accelerated significantly. In addition, by removing excess tissue there is often an increased distance from the bracket to the gums allowing patients to brush better resulting in less decalcification (or scarring of the teeth) and less discomfort at adjustment appointments.

An additional benefit of the diode laser is its effect on mouth sores. The “vaporizing” action of the laser also can be used to stop the progression and subsequent discomfort of aphthous ulcers (canker sores) and herpetic lesions (cold sores).

Patients are often surprised to learn that there is virtually no discomfort during the laser procedure. A topical anesthetic is placed a few minutes before the procedure is begun. The laser treatment itself takes only a few minutes, and the results are immediate. The gums may have a slightly different appearance immediately after laser use. However, the patient should experience a full recovery within the next few days.

Please contact our staff or our doctors if you have any questions about laser use.