

## **Acute Necrotizing Ulcerative Gingivitis (ANUG)**

**This entity used to be called "Trench Mouth" because of its prevalence in soldiers fighting in the trenches during World War I. It is caused by a combination of high stress and inferior oral hygiene. It is characterized by red, inflamed gums which are painful to the touch and which bleed easily. There is often a characteristic fetid odor to the breath and a bad, metallic taste in the mouth.**

**Normal Gingivitis: All types of gingivitis have essentially the same cause. Inferior or poor oral hygiene allows dental plaque, which is composed mostly of live bacteria to accumulate on the teeth. Plaque is normally concentrated between the teeth and around the necks of the teeth at the gum line (because these areas are protected from external forces such as the tongue, lips, toothbrushes, etc.). Therefore being a good brusher alone will not eliminate all of the plaque from one's teeth.**

**The body fights the bacteria by causing the gums around the necks of the teeth and in between the teeth (the gingiva) to become inflamed. Inflammation simply means that the gums build extra blood vessels (arteries and veins) to combat the infection, which in turn causes them to become red and swollen. They bleed easily when touched, but are generally fairly painless to touch. When the plaque is cleaned off the gums and oral hygiene is improved, the swelling, redness and tendency to bleed disappear.**

**ANUG: However, when a patient is under prolonged stress, his or her immune system becomes**

**depressed and instead of simply becoming inflamed, the bacteria actually start to "eat" or dissolve the living gum tissue. As the bacteria attack the living tissue, it becomes "necrotic", or dead. This dead tissue tends to smell pretty rank, and the patient's breath becomes fetid. The resultant, grayish material surrounding the teeth is composed of a mixture of dental plaque and dead gum tissue. This type of tissue bleeds profusely to any external stimulus and is often very painful (especially as the disease becomes more advanced). The pain and bleeding usually leads to avoidance of cleaning which leads to a worsening of the ANUG.**

**Stress is the element that produces ANUG from a regular gingivitis. It is often seen in college students, divorces, death in a family, etc. Stress on the immune system can come in many forms: Aids, low income single parents trying to care for multiple children with little outside support, cancer, etc are the types of conditions that can lead to ANUG.**

**ANUG in its early stages is fairly easily treated by antibiotics and perfection of oral hygiene techniques (especially between the teeth and along the gum line). A good dental cleaning to eliminate calculus (tartar) deposits from the teeth is an essential part of treatment since calculus harbors dental plaque on the teeth. Advanced ANUG can lead to tooth loss. ANUG will return if oral hygiene is not maintained at a very high level and stress relief is not instituted. The rate of reoccurrence is relatively high because life style changes are hard to make.**

**ANUG is not contagious. Go to next Page.**

**Photo of Advanced Case of ANUG:**



**Go to next Page.**

**Photo of Case After Initial Calculus Removal:**

