

Gingival Recession Management

A Clinical Manual

Adrian Kasaj
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Definition of Gingival Recession and Anatomical Considerations

1

Adrian Kasaj

Abstract

The gingiva is an integral part of the periodontium that covers the cervical portions of the teeth and the alveolar processes of the jaws. In health, the closely adapted gingival tissues provide effective protection against mechanical trauma and bacterial invasion and also play a critical role in aesthetics. Therefore, a recession of the gingival margin not only affects the aesthetic appearance but may cause several adverse consequences due to exposure of the root surface. This chapter provides a definition of gingival recession and gives a basic overview of the anatomical characteristics of the gingiva. A basic understanding of the macroscopic and microscopic features of healthy gingiva is a precondition for accurate evaluation and treatment of gingival recession defects.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Definition of Gingival Recession

Gingival recession is defined as “the migration of the gingiva to a point apical to the cemento-enamel junction” [1]. Since the apical movement of the gingival margin is also associated with a loss of the other components of the periodontium, it has been suggested that the term “periodontal recession” would provide a more accurate representation of this clinical condition. However, both terms are often used synonymously in the scientific literature to describe this clinical entity (Fig. 1.1).

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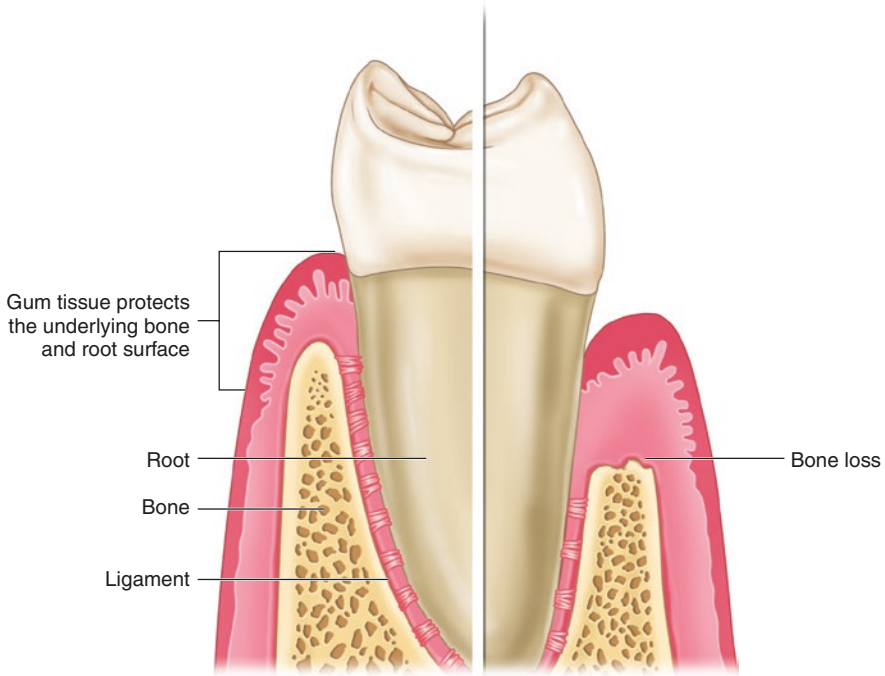


Fig. 1.1 Diagram of healthy gingiva covering the root of the tooth (left side) compared to root exposure due to apical migration of the gingival margin (right side)

Gingival recession can be localized or generalized and may involve one or more tooth surfaces. The exposure of the root surface as a result of attachment loss has been related to several conditions such as dentine hypersensitivity, root caries, cervical abrasion, difficult maintenance of oral hygiene, and compromised aesthetics. Certainly, not all gingival recession defects cause problems and require treatment. However, it is important to locate and identify those recession defects that would most benefit from a root coverage procedure.

In order to understand the pathogenesis, diagnosis, and therapy of gingival recession, a thorough knowledge about the structure and function of gingival tissues is necessary.

1.1.2 Clinical Features of Healthy Human Gingiva

The gingiva is a part of the masticatory mucosa and the most superficial part of the periodontium. Clinically, the gingiva forms a protective collar around a tooth and is attached in part to the tooth and in part to the alveolar process (Figs. 1.2 and 1.3). It is the only part of the periodontium that allows external visual inspection during an oral exam. The color of normal gingiva is generally described as pink or coral pink

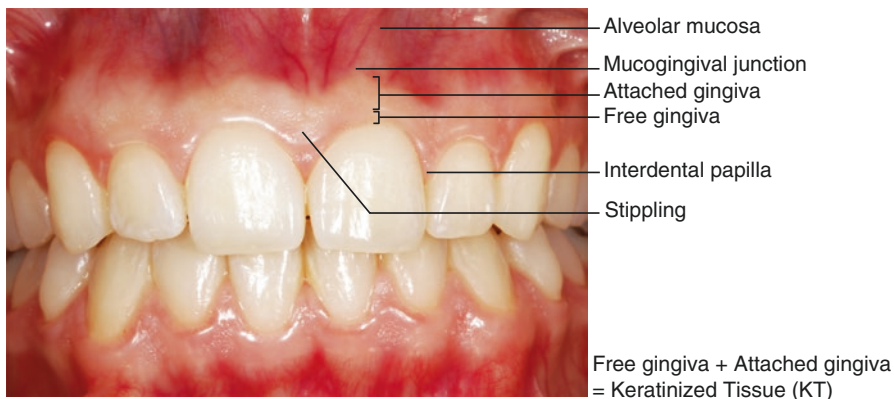


Fig. 1.2 Anatomical characteristics of clinically healthy gingiva

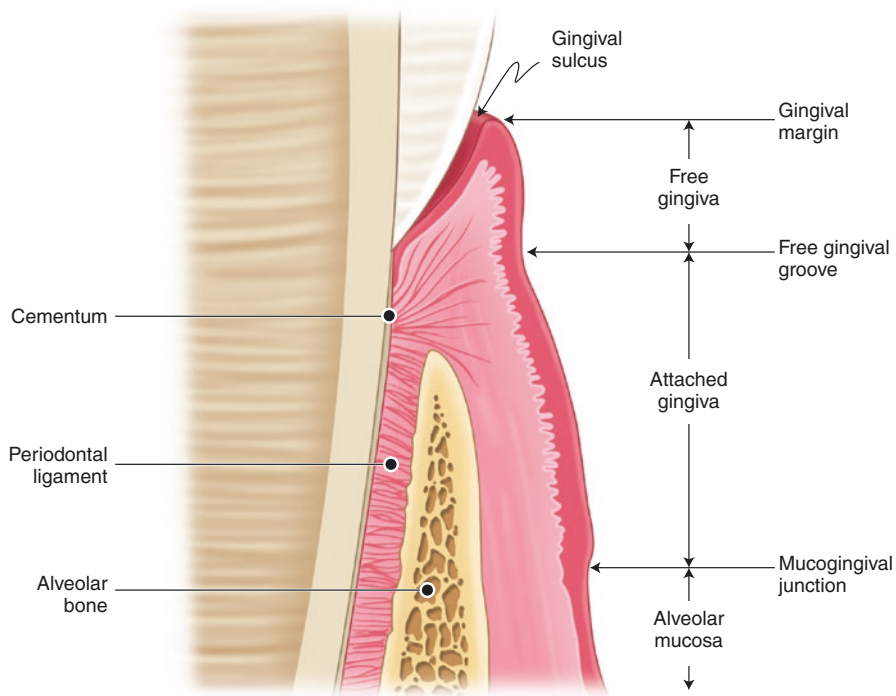


Fig. 1.3 Important anatomic landmarks of the healthy gingiva in cross section