



PENNSYLVANIA CENTER
FOR DENTAL IMPLANTS
AND PERIODONTICS

Philip L. Fava II, DMD, MDSc
Robert A. Levine, DDS, FCPP
9880 Bustleton Ave, Suite 211
Philadelphia, PA 19115
PADentalImplants.com
215-677-8686

Case of the Month: Gingival Depigmentation

Treating Periodontist: Philip Fava II DMD, MDSc

32 yo female presents with a chief complaint about the discoloration of her gums. As an extremely outgoing personality who is building her real estate business, she desired the ability to feel more comfortable with her smile.



Before: Note the gingival symmetry, esthetic tooth form, and high smile line. Physiologic pigmentation is present and represents a random pattern, that the patient feels is unattractive. *The importance in a case with a high smile line like this is to not disrupt the aesthetics present (other than the pigmentation).*



Immediate post op: Note the epithelium as well as the pigmented cells in the basal lamina (the melanocytes) are removed. Underlying exposed connective tissue does not bleed and the patient is comfortable and maintains normal hygiene on the lingual and occlusal surfaces but uses Periosciences or Closys as a hygiene substitute while healing



Two weeks post op: Upon two weeks healing tissues look nearly untouched but now with now pigmentation. The hue of the gingiva now matches the areas originally non-pigmented gingiva. It is incredibly important to treat all areas present in a non-guarded smile including the gingival margin. Often patients will guard their smile until after treatment, upon which they may display more intra-oral structures.



6 months post op: Tissue is mature and still devoid of pigmentation. This is because the cells that produce the pigment that moves through the layers of epithelium have been removed. These melanocytes replicate with very low frequency and thus this treatment is superior to bleaching, or de epithelialization which only removes the superficial cells leaving the melanocytes to continue to produce pigment.



Before:



After:



Summary:

Cases with gingival pigmentation can be treated very predictably using the Millenium MVP-7 laser. The key to a long term outcome is removing the melanocytes in the basal lamina. The Millenium laser is capable of performing this safely without over heating or removing valuable soft and hard tissue. In any case of depigmentation, it is absolutely paramount to maintain the esthetics present as pigmentation is a physiological variation, and not pathology. This patient was ecstatic about her outcome and comfort. She and I are looking into treating her lip mucosa at this time as well.

