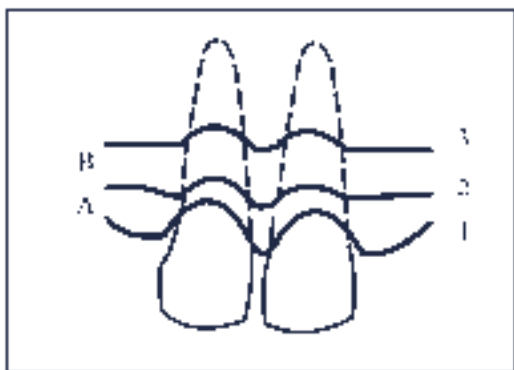


the healing process, but may not be enough in itself to heal the damage from the disease process. After the scaling appointments are completed, a six to eight week healing period is generally allowed so that your doctor can evaluate the level of healing and disease control. At this re-evaluation appointment, your doctor will determine if additional treatment is needed to resolve any residual periodontal problems in your mouth.

Root Planing

To clarify what we are doing when we perform root planing, we would like to take time to explain just what the difference is between scaling and root planing and a normal cleaning.



In the above illustration, three lines have been drawn to represent the following:

1. the normal visible gum line
2. the normal attachment of the gums to the tooth and bone
3. the attachment level of the gums to the tooth and bone after gum disease has formed gum "pockets" around the teeth.

When the hygienist does a regular cleaning, the visible parts of the teeth and slightly under the gums (the area "A") are cleaned. When root planing is done, those deeper parts of the tooth under the gum (the area "B") are not only cleaned, but are smoothed as well to remove imbedded toxins that occur on a root when a pocket has been infected for a prolonged period. This is a more difficult procedure in comparison, and while it is usually only slightly more uncomfortable to the patient, anesthetic is necessary to numb the teeth prior to the procedure.

Root planing is done in an attempt to reduce the need for surgery where possible. In some areas, a person's body may "heal itself" following root planing; whereas other areas may require surgery. It is not possible to predict when this will happen until an adequate amount of healing time can take place (usually 6 to 8 weeks after root planing.)

How often is this process repeated

Once the disease process has been controlled, usually the whole mouth can be cleaned and polished in one appointment. To maintain periodontal health, many patients require scaling every 3 months. These follow-up appointments normally do not require anesthetic.

Scaling and Root Planing Disease Control Phase of Periodontal Management



PERIODONTICS, DENTAL IMPLANTS,
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Scaling and Root Planning

Generally, the first step of periodontal management is directed at gaining control of the active infection. This is accomplished by a joint effort on your part and ours. The active procedure accomplished in our office is commonly referred to as a "deep cleaning." Home care efforts on your part enhance the healing that occurs as a natural consequence of having the disease controlled. The more home care you accomplish during the healing phase, the better the tissues will heal and respond to this portion of your care. Proper home care techniques will be reviewed with you before and during the disease control phase.

At your deep cleaning appointments, you will be given local anesthetic to numb the gum tissue to allow the procedure to be accomplished thoroughly and yet comfortably for you. Your deep cleaning will be performed by a Registered Dental Hygienist. This procedure is divided into scaling and root planing.

Scaling

This is the removal of calcified bacterial products (tartar or calculus) from the crowns and roots of the teeth. First, an ultrasonic scaler will be used to dislodge the larger deposits and debris from above and below the gum line while rinsing constantly with a stream of water. This is then followed by fine hand instruments that slip under the gum tissue to remove calcified deposits from the pocket area to complete the scaling process.

Root Planing

After scaling is performed light strokes with an instrument are used to remove the thin layer of diseased root surface. This creates a hard, smooth root surface for the gum tissue to heal against.

What to Expect

Before your appointment: No special preparation on your part is necessary prior to your appointment. Eat a normal diet the day of your procedure.

During your appointment: Local anesthetic is used to numb the teeth and gums. This allows our hygienist to be thorough and for you to be comfortable during the procedure. Few patients experience complications from these appointments.

How much of your mouth is scaled at one appointment depends on each patient. Where significant problems are present, usually half of the mouth is scaled and root planed during one session. This allows for a good healing process.

After the appointment: You may be numb for a period of time following the procedure. When the anesthetic wears off, the gum tissue may be slightly tender. Approximately 2/3 of our patients do not require any medication for discomfort, If you are experiencing some discomfort, Tylenol or Ibuprofen may be taken. Plan on normal daily activities following this appointment.

Sensitivity

Some individuals experience sensitivity to temperature extremes (usually cold) following the scaling and root planing. Sensitivity to cold is actually a good sign. When the gum tissue heals and the swelling resolves from the infection, the tissue shrinks or recedes somewhat. This exposes a portion of the tooth that has not been exposed to the environment in your mouth. It may take anywhere from weeks to months for the newly exposed surfaces of the teeth to accommodate to these thermal changes.

Recession

The goal of scaling and root planing is to improve the health of the gum tissue. Gums that are swollen, inflamed, and infected are diseased. This treatment will, with good home care, shrink and tighten the gum tissue. You may notice that the roots of your teeth will be more exposed, and that there may be increased spacing between your teeth with healing.

How do I benefit from Scaling and Root Planing

The scaling appointments are critical to the healing process of your gums. Calculus and plaque irritate the gums and keep the gum disease active. Healing can only start in a clean mouth. If bone loss and gum disease are slight to moderate, scaling and root planing may be all that is needed to control the disease process. If your disease is more advanced, scaling and root planing will start