

Instructions following scaling & root planing (deep cleaning)

You have just undergone a “deep cleaning” procedure known as scaling and root planing. As you know, the objective of these visits is to begin resolving your periodontal disease if you are a new patient, or to prevent recurrence of disease activity if you are a maintenance patient. SCALING refers to the removal of bacterial deposits above and below the gumline while ROOT PLANING refers to the removing the thin toxic layer of root surface below the gum where the bacteria had been attached to the tooth. We hope you are relieved that the procedures weren’t as bad as you anticipated, but in case you are concerned about what to expect afterwards, here are some tips:

DISCOMFORT: You may experience some oozing or notice red in your saliva for a day or two. This is normal since the gum tissue was inflamed prior to the procedure. Should it continue to occur at a heavier rate, locate the area and apply direct pressure with moist gauze for twenty minutes, a damp washcloth will work fine if you don’t have gauze. If that does not stop the bleeding apply a moist tea bag to the area. If needed take 600-800 mg of ibuprofen every 8 hours to control discomfort. This can be supplemented with 2 tablets of Extra Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen 500mg) in between doses if necessary. Don’t hesitate to call us if you still have a concern.

RINSES: Warm saltwater rinses several times a day will be soothing and will promote healing. Try ½ a teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water. Avoid any harsh mouthwash that causes discomfort.

ORAL HYGIENE: As you are learning, daily personal plaque control is crucial to your periodontal health. If you must, avoid the areas that were just treated for one day but as soon as possible begin your “deplaquing” efforts in the area. Don’t interrupt your program at all in the rest of your mouth. Excuses are easy to find, aren’t they?!

FOOD: You can eat or drink anything you are comfortable with, but you may wish to avoid spicy, crunchy, or hot things for a day or so. Periodontal patients should stay away from foods like popcorn, nuts, sesame seeds, etc. because they tend to lodge in the pockets and cause irritation or even infection.

TOOTH SENSITIVITY: Removing the long-standing bacterial accumulations from your teeth can result in some sensitivity to cold, hot, or sweets. This sensitivity can last anywhere from a couple of weeks to a couple of months depending on the amount and duration of the bacterial accumulations. You can help end it by exercising good plaque removal since the bacterial acids are a major cause. We can also prescribe a fluoride paste for you to brush on daily that will speed your recovery. You can also try over the counter Sensodyne toothpaste.

As your treatment progresses, you will become aware of the improvements in your dental health. Please don’t hesitate to call us if you have any concerns along the way.

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