

Scaling and Root Planing Informed Consent

Periodontal disease stems from accumulation of plaque – sticky, colorless bacteria that forms on teeth. Toxins produced by the bacteria irritates the gums and hardens into calculus (tartar), destroying the supporting tissue around the teeth. As plaque and calculus build up between the teeth and the gums, gum tissue recedes from the teeth and pockets form. Tooth loss is inevitable if left untreated.

Like most disease, periodontal disease is progressive. Left untreated it will get worse and can cause serious health effects both inside the mouth and throughout the body. Patients with no periodontal issues typically see their dentist every 6 months. Patients with periodontal disease, however, need visits every 3-4 months.

Untreated periodontal disease can lead to serious illness and may even be life threatening. Periodontal disease may be permanent in nature and require life-long care. In some cases, you can treat, but never “cure” the disease.

The Scaling and Root Planing Procedure

A hygienist or dentist uses specialized instruments to remove calculus, bacterial plaque and diseased tissues, both above and below the gum level. Some, or all teeth in a quadrant (upper right; lower right; upper left; lower left) may need this treatment. Local Anesthetic is recommended for this procedure. The goal is to reduce pocket depths, remove unhealthy tissue and plaque, and thoroughly clean the root surfaces of the teeth. A “regular” cleaning will NOT treat gum disease, since the roots cannot be accessed.

Benefits of Scaling and Root Planing

- Create a clean environment in which your gums can heal;
- Reduce the chances of further irritation and infection
- Make it easier for you to keep your teeth clean
- Decrease the cost of replacing teeth lost due to gum disease.

Potential Risks (usually temporary, but may be permanent)

- Increased gum recession
- Increased sensitivity to hot, cold, and sweets
- Exposed roots may stain more readily
- Loose teeth may initially become looser, before tightening up after the procedure
- Pain, soreness, swelling, bruising, infection and/or bleeding
- Numbness in some tissue or teeth.