

Stay Ahead of Gum Disease

It is a measured fact that more than half of American citizens over the age of 30 suffer from periodontal disease. In addition to that astounding number, gum disease is the number one reason that adults lose their teeth.

Patients who struggle with periodontal disease are most likely familiar with deep cleanings, also referred to as scaling and root planing. Perhaps, you even underwent periodontal surgery to reinstate the integrity of your teeth through gum repair. Periodontal treatment does not end there.

Now, it's time to sustain healthy gums via periodontal maintenance.

Maintenance Program

Each treatment plan differs with each patient. Everyone is at a different stage, has different genetic make-up and responds completely different to treatment. Thus, your doctor will customize a treatment plan for you.

After the initial scaling and root planing, and surgery (if necessary), your doctor will maintain your oral hygiene through more frequent visits. These visits might occur every three or four months, depending on the severity of your circumstances.

Expect to have a deep cleaning every other visit or more. As a refresher, these deep cleanings (scaling and root planings) involve the dentist or hygienist utilizing a hand instrument to scale and root plane the pockets the periodontal probe initially found. The probe measures the depth of the pockets (spaces where plaque, containing bacteria, forms and hardens into tartar (or calculus).

Then, the dentist scales the pockets to remove the plaque and tartar, smooths out the root, and then, applies antibiotics to the area.

These deep cleanings are imperative if you want to preserve and keep your tooth. Think about a regular toothbrush. There is simply no way for that device to get down into the deep pockets, let alone remove the hardened tartar. You absolutely need a professional cleaning to do this.

Stick to the maintenance plan to avoid further decay and/or tooth loss.

Schedule Out

Be sure to attend your maintenance appointments. Sometimes the dentist will have excess cleaning to do in your mouth. Other times, the inflammation may be down and the visit will be shorter. The important thing is to have face time with the doctor to ensure that you do not have infection or growing bacteria.

Sensitivity

Expect to feel sensitivity around those deep pockets after a treatment. While this may occur, do not neglect your oral hygiene. Brush softly and floss gently around your teeth. An electric toothbrush is a great investment. Rinse with the appropriate mouthwash (depending on whether or not your doctor prescribed some). These three simple things can greatly reduce the plaque and tartar build up, as well as the depth of the pockets between your teeth and gums. You may also look into employing sensitive toothpaste.

Crossing Over

Once you are on the periodontal disease side, oral hygiene habits cannot be more important! You must consistently use both of them to preserve your oral health. Many periodontal disease patients are recommended to brush at least twice a day for two minutes or more with fluoride toothpaste. This gives your teeth and gum extra protection. You may also require a special pick, or a different head for your toothbrush. Your hygienist and dentist will be able to recommend the best fit for you.

Communicate

Work with your dental team of professionals. Their entire purpose is to support you in your oral hygiene goals. Honestly report back to them about progress and setbacks. Listen to their advice, as this is their field of specialty. Ask questions. Keep a notebook of questions, answers, and feedback that you can refer to as a guide until your next visit. Keep your appointments and earnestly try to follow instructions. Losing your teeth should be the absolute last possible scenario. If you work with your dentist, your chances of that happening fall quite dramatically.