

What to Expect after Scaling & Root Planing

You are in the process of having a procedure called deep scaling and root planing or simply root detoxification. Its purpose is to remove all deposits of calculus (tartar) and plaque on the teeth below the gum line and to plane, or smooth the root surfaces. This entails the removal of a thin layer of cementum covering the roots that has become infected with bacteria and their toxic byproducts.

This procedure is the beginning of a planned program designed to maintain your oral health. The most important part of the program is home care and continuing care appointments at the recommended interval. You can expect optimal results only by faithful home care on a daily basis.

Scaling and root planing helps the gums to reattach to the tooth roots. Often times this will reduce gingival bleeding, diminish inflammation, and cause the spaces (probing depths) around the teeth to decrease. This will allow you better access to clean these important areas.

After scaling and root planing is completed you may experience slight discomfort around the teeth for several days. You may notice some sensitivity to hot and cold (and sometimes sweets) for up to six weeks duration. This is a normal course of healing. You should begin to notice a definite improvement in sensitivity within two weeks.

There are several things you can do to help reduce or prevent tooth sensitivity and aid in healing following scaling and root planing. These include:

1. Gentle and thorough plaque removal 2-3 times daily with toothbrush (manual or mechanical), dental floss and/or other health care instruments recommended by our team.
2. Rinsing with warm salt water and/or taking a mild analgesic of your choice will help control discomfort (Ibuprofen, Tylenol, Aleve)
3. Perio Care or Peridex may be prescribed to help reduce inflammation and bleeding. Rinse twice a day for 30 seconds after breakfast and before bed. Continue using the rinse until instructed to stop or until it is gone, whichever is first. This will help ensure you get the complete benefits of the medication.
4. Use of desensitizing products will help reduce sensitivity to hot, cold and sometimes sweets. (Prescription Fluoride Gels, Fluoride Rinses, Sensitive Teeth toothpastes)

The benefits of scaling and root planing are many. However, this procedure alone is not always sufficient to stop the continued destruction of periodontal disease. Approximately 4-6 weeks after active therapy re-evaluation and polishing of the teeth are necessary to determine the degree of healing and assess whether a specialist's opinion is necessary. Recall appointments every three months allow us to continually monitor your periodontal status and intervene with additional treatment if needed.