



Understanding Periodontal Disease and the Importance of Scaling and Root Planing

What is Periodontal Disease?

Periodontal disease, commonly known as gum disease, is a chronic infection of the tissues and bones that support your teeth. It begins with plaque buildup, which is a sticky film of bacteria that forms on your teeth. When the plaque is not removed, it hardens into tartar which leads to inflammation of the gums (gingivitis) and if left untreated, will progress to periodontitis - the more advanced stage of gum disease in which there has been bone loss.

Signs of Periodontal Disease:

- Red, swollen, or tender gums.
- Bleeding while brushing or flossing.
- Persistent bad breath or bad taste.
- Receding gums, exposing tooth roots.
- Loose or shifting teeth.

Why is Periodontal Disease Dangerous?

If left untreated, periodontal disease can lead to:

- **Bone Damage:** Periodontitis causes irreversible destruction to the jawbone. Unlike gingivitis, which is reversible, once there has been bone loss there is no way to regenerate bone except by surgery.
- **Tooth Loss:** The infection weakens the gums and underlying bone, causing teeth to become loose and eventually fall out.
- **Systemic Health Issues:** Research links periodontal disease to serious health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory disease.

What is Scaling and Root Planing (Deep Cleaning)?

Scaling and root planing (SRP) often called a "deep cleaning" is a non-surgical periodontal therapy used to treat gum disease and prevent its progression. Our hygienists perform an assessment of your gums called Probing or Perio Charting in which measurements are taken to determine the health of the gums and if any bone loss is present. This in addition to x-rays and a Doctor exam will determine if SRP is recommended. During the scaling and root planning, the dental hygienist removes plaque, tartar, and bacteria from the surface of your teeth and below the gum line.

SRP is typically performed under local anesthesia to ensure your comfort and usually requires 2 dental visits, depending on the severity of the disease.

Why is Scaling and Root Planing Important?

Scaling and root planing is essential for stopping the progression of periodontal disease because it:

- **Eliminates Bacteria:** Removing harmful bacteria reduces inflammation and prevents further gum damage.
- **Restores Gum Health:** Although bone loss is irreversible, inflammation of the gums is not. SRP Encourages gum tissue to heal and reattach to the teeth.
- **Prevents Tooth Loss:** Helps preserve the supporting structures of your teeth.
- **Protects Overall Health:** Reduces the risk of gum disease-related systemic health complications.

Take Control of Your Gum Health

Early treatment of periodontal disease can save your teeth and protect your overall health. If there is advanced periodontal disease present, treatment can prevent further damage and restore you back to a state of health. If scaling and root planing has been recommended for you or if you notice signs of gum disease, do not delay treatment. Your oral health is our priority!