

## Post Operative Instructions Scaling and Root Planing

**What is Periodontal disease?** Periodontal, or gum, disease is an infection that can result in tooth loss if not treated. Until the end stage, Periodontal disease is a silent, painless disease. It is caused by bacteria, which colonize on the roots and create an inflammatory response in the tissues that surround and support the teeth. Periodontal pockets are created under the gums which cannot be cleaned or maintained by regular oral hygiene. Over time these toxins and the body's response can destroy gum and bone tissue. This is a progressive disease and if left untreated, the condition will worsen.

**What is Scaling and Root Planing?** Scaling and root planing is nonsurgical periodontal therapy used to remove plaque and tartar beneath the gum line and to smooth the root surfaces using ultrasonic and hand instruments. This will allow the gum tissue to heal and reattach to the tooth. Depending on the extent of the disease, one or more sections, or quadrants, of the mouth may be treated. Treatment may require one or more visits. A local anesthetic may be given to reduce any discomfort during treatment.

**Post Operative Instructions:** After the scaling and root planing treatment avoid chewing foods until the local anesthetic wears off to prevent injury to the tongue or cheeks. Acetaminophen or a non-aspirin analgesic like Ibuprofen 400 to 600mg should be taken every four to six hours to reduce discomfort. Discomfort or pain should not be acute and should subside in a few hours to a few days. Rinse mouth with warm water and salt the first day or two. A diet of soft food is advised until chewing becomes more comfortable.

Slight bleeding may occur during the next several brushings, but any discomfort due to brushing should get better in a few days. Be sure to brush gently, but thoroughly after treatment. Also, if teeth become sensitive to temperature changes and/or sweets, this too usually diminishes after a few days. If it is prolonged please contact our office. However, the root surfaces may be more exposed as the swelling of the inflamed gum tissue decreases and can result in more space between the teeth.

**Periodontal Up Keep:** After scaling and root planing treatment, professional cleaning appointments every three to four months are critical. Even excellent oral hygiene care at home, which includes brushing twice a day and cleaning between the teeth once a day with floss or an interdental aid, can only remove plaque 1-3mm under the gums. The thorough removal of plaque from every surface of every tooth, including as far under the gums as possible, is critical in the healing response.