

## Oral Hygiene Instruction

Oral hygiene instruction is helpful and educational information meant to teach and guide our patients to prevent new cavities, and to maintain healthy teeth and gums. At your initial oral hygiene visit, your hygienist will instruct you on the proper methods of brushing and flossing. Follow up visits will be to further assess your progress in maintaining good oral health, and to help review and reinforce techniques of cleaning at home.

### Prophy/Scaling with Inflammation:

- **Brush your teeth at least twice a day.** Brushing removes dental plaque, which is a sticky, colorless film of bacteria on tooth surfaces. If plaque is not removed, some of it can harden below the gumline and irritate the gums. Use fluoride toothpaste and a small soft-bristled toothbrush to reach all areas of your mouth. (Medium or hard bristles can damage your gums and tooth enamel.) When you brush, place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle toward your gums. This helps sweep away plaque and bacteria at the gum line. Be sure to brush all teeth surfaces, including the backs, chewing surfaces, and sides facing the tongue. Brush gently using small, circular motions to help work bacteria out of the pockets created by the gum tissue around the tooth. Do not scrub hard back and forth. Brush for the full 2 minutes each time.
- **Floss once daily.** You can't reach the spaces between your teeth with brushing alone. To clean these areas, you need dental floss. Use about 18 inches of floss, wrapping around your middle fingers. Curve the floss like the letter "C" around each tooth, keeping in contact with the side of the tooth. Slide the floss up and down under the gum tissue. It is important to floss under the gums, as this is where bacteria like to hide. No sawing back and forth motion, slide up and down hugging the tooth.
- **Brush your tongue.** Your tongue holds bacteria like a sponge. Whenever you brush your teeth, don't forget to brush your tongue. You can use your toothbrush for this purpose. Or, you can purchase a tongue scraper in the oral health aisle.
- **water flossers.** Water Flossers are great for flushing bacteria and debris from under the tissue. However, they cannot breakthrough the contact point between the teeth.

Flossing is still recommended for this reason; however the addition of a water flosser is always beneficial.

**SRP:**

Scaling & Root Planing (SRP) was completed to access, debride and clean the root surfaces of your teeth in a way not possible with a routine cleaning.

It is normal to have soreness and increased bleeding for a few days after the procedure and it will resolve itself. It is also possible to have some increased sensitivity - to hot/cold, or sweets. This can last for a week or so. Sensodyne toothpastes can help to speed the resolution of this more quickly.

After your scaling & root planning procedure, the gums will begin to tighten, which will in turn reduce the pocket depths – the spacing between the teeth and the gums. As your periodontal conditions heals, this may expose more of your roots than you are accustomed to seeing. This is also entirely normal.

After your procedure, brush your teeth more gently for the first 1-3 days. After this period, you may resume your normal brushing. Additionally, rinsing with warm salt water 2 to 4 times per day will help speed healing.

Resolving gum issues is also done in a partnership with the patient's home care habits. Flossing is essential. The use of a waterpik and electric toothbrush is always recommended for those with periodontal disease issues. It may also be beneficial to have Arestin (antibiotic) placed into the pockets at the time of the cleaning, along with Laser disinfection to disinfect the pockets prior to placement.

After scaling & root planing, you will need to be seen more frequently (3-4 times per year) during the first 12-18 months and sometimes permanently depending on periodontal conditions. If warranted, and if things improve, we may lengthen your recall interval or customize a cleaning schedule with the hygienist appropriate for your individual needs.

Twice-daily brushings and regular flossing are excellent for maintenance between office visits, but a healthy mouth and beautiful smile require routine general and preventive care to stay that way. Our practice offers hygiene care that includes regular oral examinations and cleanings.