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## Post-Operative Instructions for Scaling and Root Planing

Periodontal treatments depend on the type of the gum disease and how severe it is. **If the disease is caught early (when it is gingivitis), and no damage has been done to the supporting structures under the teeth, you may simply need a professional cleaning.** The dental team can give you tips for improving your daily oral hygiene.

Even with these measures, some patients develop more severe periodontal disease. The first step in treating the disease usually involves a special deep cleaning called **“scaling and root planing.”** In this treatment, the dentist removes plaque and tartar down to the bottom of each periodontal pocket. This treatment may be done over several visits, depending on your needs.

The root surfaces of the teeth are then smoothed (or “planed”) to allow the gum tissue to heal and reattach to the teeth. This treatment also may take more than one visit.

**Your dentist may recommend medications** to help control infection and pain or to aid healing. These can include a pill, a mouth rinse or a medication that the dentist places directly into the periodontal pocket after scaling and root planing.

**If you smoke or chew tobacco, it is important to quit.** Ask your dentist or physician for information about ways to stop.

**Another dental visit will be scheduled** within a few weeks or months after your last scaling and root planing treatment. At this visit, your dentist or hygienist will look at your gums to see how they have healed. He or she will measure the periodontal pockets again. If the pockets have gotten deeper and the supporting bone is lost

### Oral Hygiene at Home

Good oral hygiene at home also is very important to help keep periodontal disease from becoming more serious or from coming back. Daily home cleaning helps keep plaque under control and reduces tartar buildup.

- Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss your teeth (or use another between-the-teeth cleaner) once a day.

You don't have to lose teeth to periodontal disease. Brush, clean between your teeth, eat a healthy diet and visit your dentist regularly for a lifetime of healthy smiles.