

Periodontal Therapy Instructions

So, you have been told that you are going to need periodontal therapy or in the old fashioned vernacular, scaling and root planning. This could mean many things. You haven't had a dental cleaning in a number of years and you have far too much tartar to be taken off in one visit. It could mean that you have the beginnings of periodontal or gum disease. It could also mean that you have not seen a dentist in many years and have a more advanced stage of periodontal disease. Sometimes, people that have had scaling and root planning need to have it again after a few years of maintenance in order to get them back to optimal health. There are many reasons why your dental professional wants you to have this procedure. Let's talk about what it will look like and what to do after the therapy.

The cleaning can be done a variety of ways depending on your health, anxiety and severity of the condition. Your registered dental hygienist may want to clean your mouth in quadrants meaning one quarter at a time. Maybe you can have one half or two quadrants done in one visit. It may be that the whole mouth can be cleaned in one long appointment. Timing will also vary according the factors we discussed before. The basic protocol is to break the appointments into one hour for each quadrant. Frequently two quadrants will be done in an hour and a half. In some rare cases, the practitioner will clean three or four teeth at each visit.

The best way to set yourself up to win with these appointments is to take a few steps that will insure the most comfort and the least distress.

- You will probably be anesthetized (numb) for this visit so get some soft foods in stock like soup and apple sauce. You will also want to avoid crunchy foods like tortilla chips for a few days.
- Over-the-counter anti-inflammatories work best for soreness following treatment. The most common being Advil, Motrin, or generic Ibuprofen. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and drink a lot of water with them because they will cause dehydration if you don't.
- Gentle rinsing with warm salt water will make your gums feel less tender as well. Only use ¼ teaspoon per one 8 oz glass. Remember to rinse gently.
- You may be advised to avoid power brushes or flossing for a short period of time.
- Always follow the instructions given by your dental health professional.
- Remember! This will be the most challenging part of your periodontal therapy. Stick with it and you will be having regular maintenance appointments in no time. The biggest mistake patients make is to stop therapy before it is completed and then have to start over at a later date.