



## GREEN LAKES DENTAL

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### *Scaling & Root Planing: Overview and Post-Op Instructions*

#### Overview

**Scaling & Root Planing (SRP)** is done to treat periodontitis. Periodontitis is an infection that damages the soft tissue and bone supporting the tooth. Without treatment, the alveolar bone around the teeth is slowly and progressively lost. In order to access, debride and clean the root surfaces of your teeth, we utilize scaling and root planing to cleanse the cementum (root surface) of the toxins, plaque and bacterial build up below the gum line. The procedure is considerably more involved than a standard cleaning. Scaling and Root Planing is similar to cleaning an infected wound. During this procedure, the hygienist will use special tools to remove the bacteria, plaque, and calculus from the spaces underneath the gums. A topical or local anesthetic is usually used during this process to reduce discomfort.

We will normally see you more frequently (3-4 times per year) during the first 12-18 months following SRP. This is done so to insure a complete and positive response to treatment. If warranted, and if things improve, we may lengthen your recall interval or otherwise customize a cleaning schedule appropriate for your needs.

Periodontal disease left untreated can cause serious overall health problems. Research has linked periodontal disease to heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis, premature births and low birth weight. Diabetics can have far more difficulty controlling their diabetes as well.

With such serious effects, we must do everything we can to help find and control periodontal disease. It can be a challenge to predict when the symptoms of periodontal disease may recur because frequently it does not cause any pain.

Keep in mind that periodontal disease **cannot be cured**; it can only be **controlled**. This is why we need to examine the health of your gums at least every three to four months. If periodontal disease is not closely monitored and controlled, the disease can quickly worsen, destroy bone and soft tissue, and eventually cause tooth loss.

#### **What about my insurance?**

**We make our recommendations based on the actual clinical evaluation and always with the best interest of our patient's oral health in mind.** We do not determine our patients' recare schedule based on what insurance covers, it is based upon science and your health. Most of our insured 3 month Periodontal Maintenance/Recare patients pay for one or two appointments a year out of pocket. By following the prescribed recommendation they avoid future problems such as extensive periodontal treatment, possible surgery, tooth extraction and the additional cost involved with these major treatments

## **Post-operative instructions**

It is normal to have soreness and increased bleeding in your gums for 2-4 days after the procedure. Do not be alarmed if this is the case - it will resolve itself.

**The use of dental anesthetics** means that you may be numb for a few hours after the procedure. We recommend that you avoid chewing until feeling has returned to avoid biting your cheeks, lips and/or tongue. If you must eat, try soft foods and chew on the opposite side if possible.

Your gums will be irritated during the procedure. This can be mildly uncomfortable for about 48- 72 hours. We recommend the following:

- Warm salt water rinses (½ glass of water with ½ tsp of salt), 2X daily for a few days
- Avoid hot or spicy foods until the gums are healed (2-3 days)
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco as this can slow healing.

**Pain Control:** It is unlikely that you will need medication to deal with discomfort. If you need to, please take what you would normally take for a headache, but contact the office to let us know that there is a problem.

**Alternate:** 3 Advil/Ibuprofen (600mg total) & 2 Tylenol/Acetaminophen (650mg total) every 4-6 hours as needed

Tooth sensitivity may be noted due to the cleaning of the roots. This should dissipate within a few days and can often be well-controlled with anti-sensitivity toothpaste such as sensodyne.

**Home Care:** Brush the treated area very lightly the first night. This can be made more comfortable by running your soft toothbrush under hot water to further soften the bristles.

- The following day you should begin flossing very gently and gradually return to normal brushing and flossing over the next week.
- If prescribed a mouth rinse, please use it as directed. Until healed, avoid mouth rinses with alcohol to avoid discomfort.
- Good home care is extremely important to maintain healthy tissues after healing.

**When to call us:** Discomfort and swelling are normal for the first several days. You should call us if bleeding, discomfort or sensitivity increases or continues beyond 3-4 days. If you have any questions about this information, please ask your provider.

# Patient Timeline and Appointment Breakdown



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