

Periodontal Therapy

Maintenance

It only takes twenty four hours for plaque that is not removed from your teeth to turn into calculus (tartar)! Daily home cleaning helps control plaque and tartar formation, but those hard to reach areas will always need special attention.

Once your periodontal treatment has been completed, Dr. Kaminski will recommend that you have regular maintenance cleanings (*periodontal cleanings*), usually four times a year. At these cleaning appointments, the pocket depths will be carefully checked to ensure that they are healthy. Plaque and calculus that is difficult for you to remove on a daily basis will be removed from above and below the gum line.

In addition to your periodontal cleaning and evaluation, your appointment will usually include:

- **Examination of diagnostic x-rays (radiographs):** Essential for detection of decay, tumors, cysts, and bone loss. X-rays also help determine tooth and root positions.
- **Examination of existing restorations:** Check current fillings, crowns, etc.
- **Examination of tooth decay:** Check all tooth surfaces for decay.
- **Oral cancer screening:** Check the face, neck, lips, tongue, throat, cheek tissues, and gums for any signs of oral cancer.
- **Oral hygiene recommendations:** Review and recommend oral hygiene aids as needed. (Electric toothbrushes, special periodontal brushes, fluorides, rinses, etc.)
- **Teeth polishing:** Remove stain and plaque that is not otherwise removed during tooth brushing and scaling.

Good oral hygiene practices and periodontal cleanings are essential in maintaining dental health and keeping periodontal disease under control!

Periodontal treatment methods depend upon the type and severity of the disease. Dr. Kaminski will evaluate for periodontal disease and recommend the appropriate treatment.

Periodontal disease progresses as the sulcus (pocket or space) between the tooth and gums gets filled with bacteria, plaque, and tartar, causing irritation to the surrounding tissues. When these irritants remain in the pocket space, they can cause damage to the gums and eventually, the bone that supports the teeth!

If the disease is caught in the early stages of *gingivitis*, and no damage has been done, one to two regular cleanings will be recommended. You will also be given instructions on improving your daily oral hygiene habits and having regular dental cleanings.

If the disease has progressed to more advanced stages, a special periodontal cleaning called **scaling and root planning** (*deep cleaning*) will be recommended. In this procedure, tartar, plaque, and toxins are removed from above and below the gum line (*scaling*) and rough spots on root surfaces are made smooth (*planning*). This procedure helps gum tissue to heal and pockets to shrink. Medications, special medicated mouth rinses, and an electric tooth brush may be recommended to help control infection and healing. It can all be accomplished in one visit while sedated instead of four visits.

If the pockets do not heal after scaling and root planning, periodontal surgery may be needed to reduce pocket depths, making teeth easier to clean.

Gingivitis

Gingivitis is the first stage of periodontal disease. Plaque and its toxin by-products irritate the gums, making them tender, inflamed, and likely to bleed.

Periodontitis

Plaque hardens into calculus (tartar). As calculus and plaque continue to build up, the gums begin to recede from the teeth. Deeper pockets form between the gums and teeth and become filled with bacteria and pus. The gums become very irritated, inflamed, and bleed easily. Slight to moderate bone loss may be present.

Advanced Periodontitis

The teeth lose more support as the gums, bone, and periodontal ligament continue to be destroyed. Unless treated, the affected teeth will become very loose and may be lost. Generalized moderate to severe bone loss may be present.