



Prophy vs Scaling and Root Planing



If you have been diagnosed with periodontal disease, your doctor may recommend a more advanced cleaning called scaling and root planing as the first step in treating it. There are some significant differences between this and a routine dental cleaning that are important to understand.



A routine dental cleaning is designed for prevention- meaning its purpose is keeping gum disease and tooth decay from developing.



It involves your hygienist cleaning your teeth above the gum line- removing plaque, tartar, and stains, as well as polishing them. This usually takes place every 6 months.



On the other hand, scaling and root planing is a specialized procedure meant as an initial treatment for patients diagnosed with periodontitis to remove the excessive plaque and bacteria deposits that caused it, and halt the spread of the disease.



It involves your doctor or hygienist removing excessive calculus and bacterial deposits deep beneath the gumline, and is usually performed with a hand instruments and an ultrasonic cleaner that uses high frequency vibration to separate the calculus from the tooth.



Additionally, any uneven surface areas of the teeth will be smoothed out to discourage additional bacteria from attaching. The procedure may require multiple appointments done in stages to ensure you are as comfortable as possible.



Scaling and root planing is a vital treatment to control the spread of periodontal disease and prevent additional complications to your oral and systemic health. Once completed, your doctor will work with you to create a maintenance schedule that best promotes the continued rehabilitation of your gum tissue.