

DEEP CLEANINGS FOR GUM DISEASE

What you need to know before, during and after your appointments



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A deep cleaning, also known as scaling and root planing (SRP), is different from the regular cleaning you get during a preventive dental checkup. **This procedure is only necessary if you have periodontitis—an advanced form of gum disease.**

Stages of gum disease



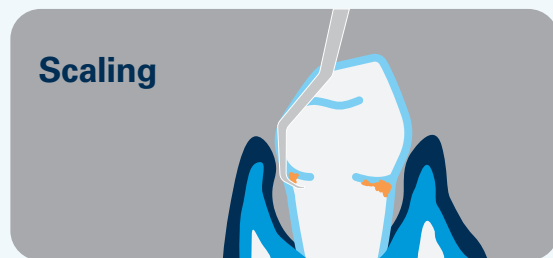
Gingivitis is the mildest form of gum disease. Symptoms include red, swollen or bleeding gums as well as little to no pain. Gingivitis can be reversed with twice-daily brushing and flossing at home along with regular cleanings. You do not need a deep cleaning for this type of gum disease. However, if plaque spreads and grows beneath the gums, gingivitis can progress to periodontitis.



Periodontitis is where bacteria destroys tissue and bone support around your teeth, causing your gums to pull away from the teeth (gum pockets). Extreme cases can lead to loose teeth or even tooth loss.

Treating periodontitis

To treat periodontitis, your dentist needs to remove the bacteria and tartar (hardened minerals) from the root surfaces beneath your gums. Regular preventive cleanings cannot do this. At this point, your dentist may recommend a deep cleaning.



For a complete deep cleaning, you typically need two appointments.

Some people may need up to four, depending on the severity of the condition. Each appointment should last about 60-90 minutes.

What can I expect during my deep cleaning appointments?

Deep cleanings can be done by a dental hygienist in a traditional dental office. Your dentist may also refer you to a periodontist (a gum specialist). Your dentist or hygienist will give you local anesthesia during each appointment. They will use tools to remove tartar and bacteria. At each appointment, they will work on specific sections of your mouth.



What can I expect after my appointments?

Before going home, your dentist or hygienist will explain post-procedure instructions, including your necessary oral home care, and provide advice on how to continue to remove plaque daily.



It is common to have some discomfort or pain after your procedure. Ask your dentist for over-the-counter pain medicine recommendations. They may also prescribe an antibiotic or oral rinse.



You will have a follow-up visit around four weeks after your last treatment to allow your gums to heal. During this visit, your dentist or hygienist will evaluate your gums and determine the success of your procedure. They will measure your gums to look for any persistent gum pockets by measuring around each tooth at six different areas.



Unfortunately, there isn't a cure for periodontitis. But you can keep it under control with routine maintenance at home and through quarterly dental appointments. These visits are critical to keep the disease under control and reduce your risk of more bone loss.

If deep pockets persist or become deeper over time, your dentist may recommend additional treatment. This could include surgery by a periodontist to reduce pocket depths.



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