

## **What to Expect: Scaling & Root Planing (AKA Deep Cleaning!)**

### **When Is a Deep Cleaning Necessary?**

Although plaque can usually be spotted on teeth and around the gum line, not all bacterial build-up is immediately visible. When gum disease is present, bacteria can find their way to the roots of teeth, where regular brushing and flossing cannot reach. Patients suffering from gum disease may benefit from a scaling and root planing treatment at brush365.

Scaling and root planing, also known as a deep cleaning, is a way of removing plaque, tartar, and early signs of infection from between a tooth's roots and adjacent gum. Deep cleanings are necessary for patients whose gums have become infected as a result of gum disease, and have therefore pulled away from the teeth, allowing pockets of bacteria to form below.

Patients with this level of gum disease usually have advanced gingivitis, with symptoms including gums that are reddened, inflamed, sore, or prone to bleeding. If not treated, infection can lead to periodontitis, causing bone loss and further infection. It is also possible for roots to decay and form large cavities, resulting in the need for root canal treatment and dental crowns. With a timely deep cleaning procedure, these complications can almost certainly be avoided.

### **What Does a Deep Cleaning Entail?**

If you exhibit symptoms of progressive gum disease, your dentist will likely test the depth and tenderness of your gum line. If infection is present and a deep cleaning is suggested, the procedure will continue as follows:

- A local anesthetic will be applied OR injected into the area, limiting discomfort in your gums and teeth.
- A scaling tool will be used to scrape away plaque and tartar from the tooth's roots. This will prevent cavities and decay from forming.
- Antibiotics may be used on the tooth and inner gum to combat disease and promote healing.
- A planing tool will be used to make the tooth's surface smoother, reducing the chances of bacteria forming on it.

With the combined efforts of a deep cleaning and subsequent hygiene at home, gum disease can be controlled if not eliminated altogether.

### **Benefits of a Deep Cleaning**

Scaling and root planing is an extremely effective method of periodontal intervention. Patients who exhibit signs of gum disease will save themselves from a number of risks by undergoing this simple treatment. Common benefits include:

- **Reduced gum disease:** Patients with gingivitis or early periodontitis can combat disease through a deep cleaning. In many instances, one treatment in conjunction with regular maintenance cleanings every 3-6 months is enough for patients to eventually eliminate all symptoms of disease.
- **Prevention of tooth decay:** Gum disease can lead to the decay of tooth tissue. When decay reaches the roots of teeth, a common dental filling is not enough to remove infection. A deep cleaning is an optimal way to prevent decay and, thus, more invasive restorative procedures.
- **Better breath:** Gingivitis is a leading cause of bad breath. By fighting disease and pockets of bacteria within the gums, patients can expect their breath to smell better and be more easily manageable.
- **A healthier smile:** Gingivitis and periodontitis can cause gums to recede and become inflamed, while also resulting in shifting teeth. Root planing and scaling will reduce the chances of negative changes to your smile.