

Periodontal Cleaning

Bacterial plaque can cause decay in our teeth and cause an infection in our gums called periodontal disease. When you come in for your cleaning and examination, Dr. Hoppe and the hygienist evaluate both the health of your teeth and the health of your gums and bone support. A 1-3 mm pocket confirms healthy gums. A 4 mm pocket and bleeding indicates inflammation due to gingivitis, which can usually be reversed with conscientious home care. 5 mm or more pockets, bleeding, and pus, indicate the presence of a bacterial infection, caused by bacterial plaque, called periodontal disease. These deep pockets are not accessible by brushing and flossing, and require your hygienist to manually remove the infection with special instruments. At this point, the hygienist will alert you that you will need extra appointments so she can removed the infection to allow healing, hoping to arrest the disease process and minimize bone loss. Without adequate bone support tooth loss occurs.

It is very important to understand that you are not having a regular cleaning. You have a bacterial infection of the gums and/or bone called periodontal disease. By measuring the pockets surrounding your teeth, and reviewing x-rays, your hygienist and dentist have identified the infection in your gums.

There are many factors which can trigger the development of periodontal disease including: aging, nutrition, stress, nicotine, medications, inadequate home care, and/or a hereditary predisposition.

Concerning your insurance benefits, it is true that most insurances allow two cleanings a year for healthy patients. For patients with periodontal disease, however, you have a separate designation of benefits under the classification of periodontics. Depending on your insurance plan periodontal benefits usually range from 30 - 100%. An annual deductible may also apply. We are legally obligated to establish a fair fee representing the quality of care we provide. This same fee is charged to all our patients. We do not discriminate between our insured and non-insured patients.

Once you have been diagnosed with periodontal disease, we are obligated to provide your insurance company with the appropriate billing codes, a copy of your periodontal measurements and sometimes x-rays. While we cannot compromise the quality of care we provide our dental patients, we will do our best to ensure that you receive the dental benefits provided by your insurance plan. Without periodontal treatment to remove the bacterial infection under the gum line, irreversible bone loss occurs, which then leads to tooth loss.