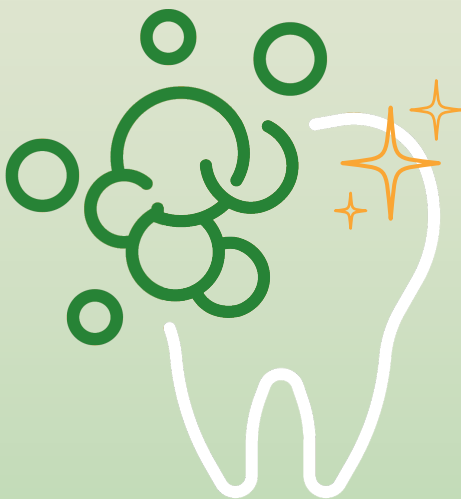




Beautiful dentistry, comfortably done.®

## Dental Cleanings



Regular dental cleanings are an essential part of maintaining your oral health. Our licensed dental hygienists perform several different types of periodontal therapies, depending upon your individual factors and needs.

Although many dental insurance companies cover the cost of a “standard” cleaning, that procedure may not be suitable for you. This brochure outlines the factors we use to determine the type of dental cleaning that is appropriate for you.

# Why Do I Need a Dental Cleaning?

As food collects on and between your teeth when you eat, the bacteria living in your mouth colonize that leftover food, turning it into **dental plaque**. That plaque can contribute to cavities, but as the bacterial colony grows it also **triggers an inflammatory reaction** from your body.

Your body attempts to fight the bacteria by bringing more blood flow to the area. With that increased blood flow to the gums comes the redness, swelling, and bleeding that is typical of gingivitis. Unfortunately, your body's immune system simply cannot remove all of the plaque, and **as the plaque hardens over time into tartar (calculus), the inflammation only increases**. Left untreated, gum disease can lead to tooth loss, infections, bad breath, difficulty eating, as well as exacerbating a myriad of systemic health conditions from heart disease, to diabetes, to Alzheimer's.

## Gum Conditions (Diagnoses)

**Mild Gingivitis** - Basic inflammation of the gums. Classic signs are redness at the gum line, mild puffiness of the gums, and bleeding at the gum line. A standard cleaning is all that is necessary when you have mild gingivitis.

**Severe Gingivitis** - Severe gingivitis means there is a lot of inflammation, a lot of bleeding, but the underlying bone is still healthy.

**Mild to Moderate Periodontitis (gum disease)** - The defining characteristics of periodontal disease are deeper probing depths and permanent bone loss under the gums. Periodontal Disease necessitates a specific type of targeted therapy, called **Scaling and Root Planing (SRP)**. SRP is done by quadrants of your mouth (i.e. upper right, lower right, etc.). It is common to need all four quadrants of SRP.

**Severe Periodontitis** - Identified by significant long-term wasting away of the bone underneath the gums, severe gum disease is best treated by a Periodontist, or gum specialist.

## How are my gums evaluated?

**Physical Appearance** - Healthy gums should be pink, and tight to the teeth. But with gingivitis and periodontitis, the gums appear swollen, inflamed, and bleed easily:



Swollen & inflamed gums

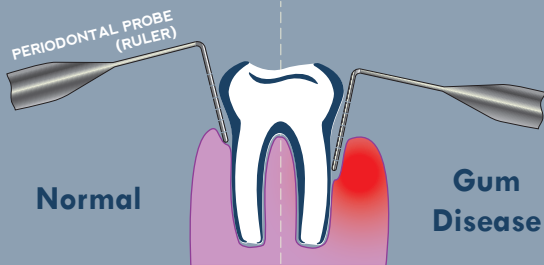
Gums that bleed easily



**Radiographs** - X-Rays are used to evaluate the bone levels under the gums, as well as showing if tartar is present below the gum line. As periodontal disease progresses, the bone level under the gums begins to waste away permanently.

## Periodontal Probing

Using a small ruler, we measure how deep the collar of gums is around each tooth.



**Probings** - The gums fit around the tooth like a turtleneck sweater. A small blunt-ended ruler is used to measure the depth of that collar around each tooth. These probings reveal a lot about your gum health. Probings  $\leq 3\text{mm}$  are ideal, while 4-5mm indicates moderate inflammation, and 5-6+mm measurements mean the bone underneath the gums is breaking down from gum disease.

**Tartar (Calculus)** - Calculus is the technical term for dental plaque that has hardened onto the teeth, but most people just call it tartar. Growing over time like a coral reef of bacteria, this calculus is devastating to the gums over the years. Different therapies are used depending upon how much calculus is present either above or below the gum line.

Soft Plaque  
&  
Hardened Tartar



**Other** - Pus, swelling, loose teeth, and painful gums are some of the other symptoms of periodontitis. Your individual oral hygiene habits also play a major role in your gum health, as well as your overall lifestyle habits, like smoking.

## How do my gums rate?

Probings:	≤3mm	≤6mm	6+ mm
Bleeding:	Minimal	Moderate	Heavy
Visible tartar:	Minimal	Moderate	Heavy
X-Ray tartar:	Minimal	Moderate	Heavy

### Additional Influences to Consider:

- Smoking and vaping history
- Diabetes, especially if poorly controlled
- Dry mouth (from medication or otherwise)
- Limited dexterity and/or poor habits
- Genetic factors

# Types of Periodontal Therapies

## (Dental Cleaning Treatments)

**Prophylaxis (D1110)** - This “standard” cleaning is what most people are familiar with as a basic dental cleaning. It is the appropriate therapy when your gingivitis is mild to moderate, with no signs of gum disease.

**Debridement (D4355)** - When there is so much tartar buildup that we cannot properly assess your gum health, a debridement is the appropriate treatment. This is designed to remove the bulk of the tartar and allow a more thorough evaluation of your gum health at a subsequent visit. Depending upon that evaluation, additional treatment may still be necessary.

**Scaling in Presence of Inflammation (D4346)** - When there is heavy inflammation, buildup, and/or bleeding, but with minimal long-term issues, this treatment is designed to cure the gingivitis by physically cleaning all of the tartar off the teeth.

**Periodontal Maintenance (D4910)** - For people with a history of gum disease treatment, and with current moderate inflammation, a Periodontal Maintenance cleaning is prescribed.

**Scaling & Root Planing (D4341/D4342)** - The best treatment for mild to moderate gum disease, Scaling & Root Planing (SRP) is the physical removal of the tartar both above and below the gum line. ***This is targeted therapy designed to arrest gum disease in its tracks.*** Typically planned per “quadrant” of your mouth, some patients may need 1, 2, 3 or 4 quadrants of treatment. Because it is considered a deeper cleaning, often this procedure is done with topical and/or local anesthetic, and may take multiple appointments to complete.

**Surgical Periodontal Treatments** - For patients with more complicated gum disease issues, a referral to a Periodontist for treatment is recommended. In addition to the above therapies, Periodontists are experts in gum surgery and can correct many chronic gum disease problems.

## I need a deeper cleaning, but why can't I just get my "free cleaning" today?

Because, the treatment you need is solely dependent upon your **DIAGNOSIS**, and not your **insurance**. With most dental insurance companies, only the "standard" cleaning (D1110) is covered fully. If your diagnosis is anything beyond moderate gingivitis, you should expect some out-of-pocket costs for your treatment. Performing a type of cleaning that does not correspond to the diagnosis, with the hopes that insurance may cover the cost, is insurance fraud.

### Diagnosis

### Necessary Treatment

Mild to Moderate Gingivitis → Standard Prophylaxis cleaning (D1110)

Severe Gingivitis → Scaling in presence of gingival inflammation (D4346)

Severe Tartar Buildup → Debridement (D4355), as well as other treatments later, as needed

Moderate Gingivitis w/past Perio. Disease → Periodontal Maintenance cleaning (D4910)

Mild Periodontal Disease (Few Teeth) → Limited SRP (Scaling & Root Planing), per quadrant (D4342)

Moderate Periodontal Disease → Thorough SRP (Scaling & Root Planing), per quadrant (D4341)

Severe Periodontal Disease → Referral to Periodontist for more thorough treatment