

# *Toole Family Dentistry, L.L.C.*

## **Homecare Instructions after Periodontal Therapy**

Today you received one of the following treatments in one or more areas of your mouth: Scaling in the presence of gingivitis, full mouth debridement (FMD) or scaling and root planning (SRP). You should be proud of yourself! Eliminating active infection in your gum tissues is one of the most important things you can do for your overall health because your mouth is the gateway to the rest of your body. If your mouth is not healthy other parts of your body may reflect the unhealthiness. Periodontal stability can be achieved with ongoing care with your dental care providers and continuous self-care. Your daily homecare is the most critical part in achieving and maintaining excellent oral health.

Your gums have just endured a very strenuous workout. The following is expected over the next 48-72 hours following periodontal treatment including homecare instructions:

### **DISCOMFORT**

As the numbness from the anesthetic wears off your gums may feel achy, itchy, and/or throbbing like a muscle ache. Jaw soreness is also common from the injection sites. Pressure applied to the mouth to remove the tartar build-up from underneath the gums can also cause soreness and a pressure-type ache when biting into foods.

### **BLEEDING/SWELLING**

Blood clots form after the cleaning to initiate the healing process. It is normal to see pea or grain of rice size blood clots. Light bleeding during brushing and flossing is very normal after gum therapy. Gums may have a swollen appearance and the jaw may have a swollen feeling. Bruising around the injection sites can sometimes occur. The jaw may have a swollen feeling as a result of the bruising. Bruising and swelling of the lower arch injections can sometimes cause a lingering numb sensation that will typically resolve slowly over the next several months. If numbness is still present at your 4-8 week re-evaluation appointment, please let us know. Sometimes a short course of anti-inflammatory and steroid medication may be needed.

### **SENSITIVITY**

Immediately following gum therapy you may experience an increase in teeth sensitivity. Deep scaling of the teeth can remove a micron layer of the tooth known as the smear layer that exposes the tiny tooth tubules. This is typically short-term and can cause the teeth to be hypersensitive to cold and hot temperature changes. To combat the sensitivity it is recommended to use Sensodyne Sensitive + Gum until your re-evaluation appointment with your hygienist. Use the toothpaste as recommended. It is okay to use the toothpaste like an ointment on areas that are not calming with regular use. In this case you can rub the toothpaste into the trouble area and leave overnight. Long term sensitivity can result after deep scaling. As the gum tissues heal and shrink around the bone it can cause recession. Recession is an elongated appearance of the tooth structure resulting in exposure of the root surface. Root surfaces do not have the hard outer enamel layer to protect it from temperature changes. Recession is common after deep scaling. The sensitivity resulting from recession may calm after several months of using a sensitive toothpaste. It may be possible that you will need to use toothpaste for sensitivity long-term.

## **PALLIATIVE CARE**

Warm salt-water rinses of ½ Tbl of salt to a cup of water 2x per day will help accelerate the healing process. Ibuprofen (Aleve) taken as directed helps the most with mouth discomfort because of its anti-inflammatory property. You can take up to 600mg 4x per day. Warm compresses applied to the jaw may help with swelling. You will want to alternate 15 minutes on then 15 minutes off when applying a warm compress.

## **DIET/SMOKING**

Avoid hard and/or crunchy foods that can traumatize or penetrate the gums such as chips, pretzels, and popcorn. Avoid hot food and drinks that could cause a burn in the mouth such as soup, tea or coffee. Avoid smoking as much as possible. Smoking restricts blood vessels that bring the healing white blood cells to the mouth. Every time you smoke it inhibits and slows the body's ability to properly heal.

## **BRUSHING/FLOSSING/RINSING**

The first day after treatment tends to be the most uncomfortable. If necessary, it is okay to avoid flossing the first day. Brushing is always advised even if soreness is present. The massaging effects of brushing the teeth and gums promote healing. If necessary, use an extra soft manual toothbrush in a short circular motion. Resume flossing as soon as possible. If you consider using a mouth rinse use a non-alcohol formula. Mouth rinse is not necessary and does not replace the benefits of flossing.

### **\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\***

Following the completion of SRP therapy a re-evaluation “re-eval” appointment will be set for 4-8 weeks after. At the re-eval new gum health number will be recorded and compared to your initial numbers to determine the success of therapy. Based on your gum health numbers, bleeding points and overall evidence of homecare an appropriate maintenance schedule of 3 or 4 months will be set by your dental hygienist. Periodontal maintenance appointments are similar to “regular” cleanings and typically don't require anesthetic but are more involved. “Maintenance” visits will always include gum health numbers to closely monitor inflammation and require a longer more diligent cleaning of all tooth surfaces. If any bleeding is present, an ultrasonic scaler will help flush out the irritating bacteria causing it. There are common oral care needs for every person. As a person with a history of gum disease your hygienist will recommend a homecare regimen specifically designed for your unique needs. As stated before, your daily homecare is the most critical part in maintaining the health of your gums. 80% of your oral care is completed by you while the other 20% is the responsibility of your dental provider team. Failing to perform your homecare could result in a reinfection of your gums. Good control of your gum disease requires a combination of more frequent dental cleaning and excellent oral care regiment at home. The frequency of cleanings is dependent on the extent of your gum disease. Working together we can achieve a healthier you :)