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Periodontal Therapy Post Care Instructions

Congratulations in taking a large first step in restoring your periodontal health! Periodontal therapy, also called scaling & root planning, is performed to remove bacteria, toxins and disease deposits and treat the underlying infection of your gums and bones called periodontitis or “gum disease”. Left untreated, periodontitis irreversibly destroys the gums and bones surrounding your teeth and will lead to tooth loss.

Furthermore, periodontitis is also associated with many systemic illnesses including heart disease, diabetes, stroke and premature low-weight birth in pregnant women. The link between periodontitis and these systemic diseases grows ever stronger as more research is performed.

Please be aware that the following effects may take place after your treatment:

1. Numbness from the anesthetic may last from 1 to 8 hours after your appointment. Be careful not to bite your tongue, lip or cheek while you are still numb. Also avoid hot foods until the numbness has worn off.
2. Discomfort in the treated gums, and where anesthetic was administered generally lasting 1-3 days.
3. Tissue sloughing or shedding as a result of the vigorous use of cleaning instruments used to remove bacteria from your roots and tissues.
4. Increased tooth sensitivity to cold and hot foods, normally lasting several days to several weeks.
5. Increased gum recession and spaces between the teeth can occur as your gums heal. This occurs because the reduction in infection causes the previously infected, swollen gums to shrink slightly.
6. A reduction in red, bleeding tender gums. As the gum tissue continues to heal, you will begin to notice firmer, healthier looking gums that do not bleed as easily.
7. A reduction in bad breath and bad taste in your mouth that resulted from noxious bacteria which were associated with your gum disease.

Home care recommendations:

1. Rinse with warm salt-water several times a day, and taking a combination of over-the-counter analgesics every 4 to 6 hours as needed for your discomfort. A very effective combination of analgesics combines 2 tablets of extra strength Tylenol with 2 tablets of Advil, Motrin or Aleve.
2. Resume gentle brushing and flossing the night of your periodontal treatment unless Arestin was used.
3. If Arestin was used, avoid brushing till the following evening and avoid flossing for 3 days.
4. Use of Sensodyne or another desensitizing toothpaste while brushing for a period of two weeks to help eliminate any sensitivity to hot or cold.
5. Call the office if you have problems or questions.