



Rebecca J. Woodward, D.M.D.
Adam S. Kaufman, D.M.D.

11 Wells Street • PO Box 2058 • Westerly, RI 02891-0917 • Phone 401-596-0888 • Fax 401-596-9710

What is Scaling and Root Planing?

Scaling and root planing is a method of treating periodontal disease when pockets, or the area between your gums and teeth, are greater than 3mm. Scaling is used to remove plaque and tarter beneath the gumline. A local anesthetic may be given to reduce any discomfort. Using an instrument called a small scaler or an ultrasonic cleaner, the hygienist or dentist carefully removes plaque and tarter down to the bottom of each periodontal pocket. The tooth's root surfaces are then smoothed or planed. This allows the gum tissue to heal. It also makes it more difficult for plaque to accumulate along the root surfaces.

How long will it take to complete my treatment?

If you require all quadrants (UL, LL, UR, LR), it could take up to four one-hour appointments. It is most desirable to schedule all your appointments one week apart so that your treatment will be completed in a month's time.

We have found that it is often best to schedule all of your appointments with the same hygienist. Once they have become familiar with your mouth they can more easily track your progress.

What happens after my treatment is completed?

After your scaling and root planing is completed you will need to come back within a month for a follow up visit. This is similar to a routine cleaning appointment. It is important that you keep up with the hygiene schedule your hygienist or dentist has determined is appropriate for you.

How do I maintain my oral health after treatment?

As mentioned before, it is imperative that you continue to come in for routine dental care. Make sure to brush and floss regularly, and your dentist or hygienist may even suggest a prescription mouthwash to aid in homecare. Maintaining a balanced diet is also suggested to support oral health (ie. reduced sugar intake).

We hope that these guidelines will help you to help us care for your teeth and assist us in reaching your dental goals. If you have any other questions or concerns please call our office at 401-596-0008.