

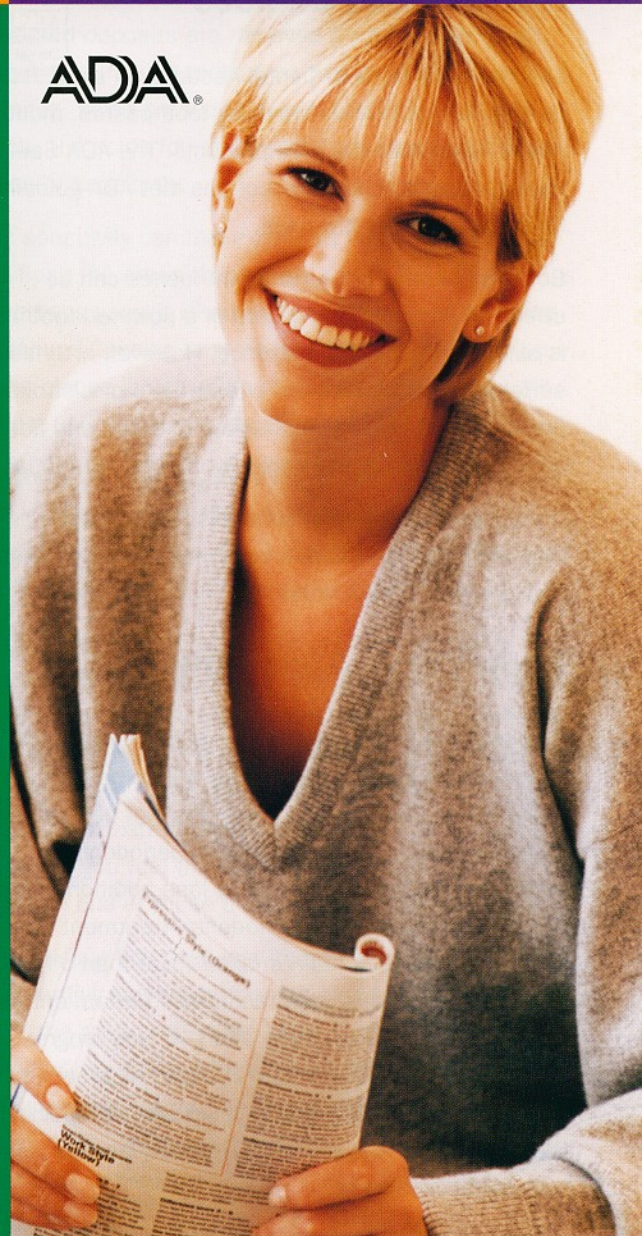


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Periodontal Maintenance Procedures

Periodontal Maintenance *Procedures*



Produced with the cooperation of the
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Preserve the Progress You Have Made

You Can Help Control Your Disease



If you have had a deep cleaning (scaling and root planing) and/or gum (periodontal) surgery, the regular cleanings that will be recommended to you after those treatments are called periodontal maintenance therapy. The cleanings will help keep you at that healthier level.

This brochure is designed to help and encourage you. By having a periodontal procedure, you demonstrated that you believe in the importance of a clean, healthy mouth. Now you can take steps to help maintain your improvement.





Keep Brushing and Flossing!

First and foremost, you must brush regularly and clean between your teeth daily. While most people know the importance of brushing, they often don't understand the importance of cleaning between the teeth. Normal toothbrushing generally cannot reach between your teeth. Unfortunately, that is where most periodontal problems occur. Because of this, you must floss or use some other interdental cleaner to get to those hard-to-reach places.

Many periodontal patients have receded gums. That often creates enough space between adjacent teeth to allow the use of interdental cleaners other than floss. Special interdental brushes and wider types of floss and picks can be good choices in these circumstances.

Regular Appointments

Maintenance appointments may be needed more frequently now than in the past. The combination of daily home care and regular professional cleanings provides the best opportunity to maintain healthy gums.

Periodontal maintenance ranks between a routine dental cleaning and a "deep cleaning" or scaling and root planing that people with periodontal disease often get at the beginning of treatment. Periodontal maintenance therapy is typically done on patients who need a deeper cleaning, because they have pockets deeper than those found in periodontally healthy adults.



Sensitive Teeth

Patients occasionally have sensitive teeth following periodontal procedures. This may happen when unwanted deposits are removed from root surfaces, sometimes making teeth sensitive to temperature changes, acids produced by oral bacteria, and even touch. The acids found in bacterial plaque are a major cause of sensitivity.

This sensitivity can make patients reluctant to brush and floss the areas that were treated. Even though it is not always easy, it is very important to keep brushing gently and flossing to remove the acid bacterial plaque. If this plaque is not routinely removed, sensitivity will persist and root decay may occur.

In almost all cases, sensitivity of teeth is a temporary problem that will go away on its own. Follow your dentist's instructions about brushing and flossing, and the healing process will reward your efforts.

At-home treatments for sensitivity may include desensitizing toothpastes or fluoride gels, but may take several weeks to be effective. If these toothpastes do not work for you, there are numerous in-office treatments to help relieve the problem. These include desensitizing fluorides, oxalates, varnishes, sealants, and bonding agents. If you feel the need for extra help, ask your dentist if one of these treatments may be right for you.

If gum tissue has been lost from the root (gum recession), your dentist may recommend a surgical gum graft to cover the root, protect the tooth and reduce the sensitivity. In cases where hypersensitivity is severe and persistent and cannot be treated by other means, your dentist may recommend endodontic (root canal) treatment to eliminate the problem.

Medications Can be Useful for Maintenance

If appropriate in your situation, your dentist may prescribe and administer medications to help keep your mouth healthy. Your dentist will discuss this with you and answer all your questions.

Make Smart Choices



Look for the American Dental Association's Seal of Acceptance on brushes, toothpastes, mouth rinses, and other oral care products. The ADA Seal is your assurance that a product has met ADA guidelines for safety and effectiveness.

Both manual and powered toothbrushes can be effective. For most, the choice of a powered toothbrush is simply a matter of preference. However, arthritis sufferers or those with the after effects of a stroke may find it difficult or even impossible to brush and floss effectively, making a powered toothbrush essential.

If you need extra help in controlling plaque and gingivitis, your dentist may recommend that you use an anti-microbial mouth rinse.

Keep Those Appointments!

Studies show that patients who follow through with periodontal maintenance therapy will do better than those who do not comply. Non-compliant patients have a greater tendency to need further periodontal treatment and are more likely to lose additional teeth. Since patients receiving periodontal treatment often need more frequent maintenance visits than other patients, your dentist may recommend treatment every three months, or even more often. As you progress, your dentist may recommend changes in appointment frequency or may refer you to a periodontal specialist. Discuss all this with your dentist, because every patient has distinctive needs.

The teamwork between you and your dentist cannot be over-emphasized. The combination of timely check-ups and everyday home care must be a part of your periodontal maintenance. Although these activities do not provide a 100% guarantee of long-term success, most patients fare better.

You have already made an important decision and a financial investment in your oral and periodontal health. Protect that investment by closely following these recommended maintenance procedures. Practicing good oral hygiene every day will reduce the risk of recurring periodontal disease.

Stay Healthy

Do not smoke or use tobacco in any form. Smoking and chewing tobacco can make periodontal conditions more severe and make maintenance much more difficult. You don't have to lose teeth to periodontal disease. Brush, clean between your teeth, eat a balanced diet, and schedule regular dental visits for a lifetime of healthy smiles. These good habits will enhance not only your dental health but your overall health as well.

Questions?

Ask your dentist, your teammate in all this, who can discuss the details of your particular situation with you.

- The success of your maintenance plan is up to you. Brush your teeth twice daily and floss (or use other interdental cleaning devices) every day.
- Follow your dentist's instructions about brushing and flossing. If your teeth become overly sensitive following periodontal treatment, ask your dentist about desensitizing toothpastes or in-office treatment options.
- When you shop for oral care products, choose ones that display the ADA Seal of Acceptance – your guarantee of safety and effectiveness.
- Keep all your appointments for dental check-ups.
- Discuss any questions or problems with your dentist.