



Frequently Asked Questions on *Dental Cleanings* Regular Cleaning, Deep Cleaning, and Periodontal Maintenance

Getting your teeth cleaned regularly by your dentist is an important step to maintain healthy teeth and gums. There are a few types of cleanings and each one is different and may require a different patient payment. As always, your dentist will recommend the appropriate cleaning to suit your personal dental needs.

The information below will help you understand the difference between procedures and in turn appreciate the importance of prevention and treatment of dental disease.

What is a Prophylaxis-D1110?

A prophylaxis is sometimes referred to as a “regular cleaning.” It is considered a preventive procedure where the dentist or hygienist removes plaque, tartar and stains from the teeth. The dentist may recommend this procedure at regular intervals, possibly once or twice per year, for patients whose gum health is generally good (healthy gum color and texture, minimal plaque and debris, and shallow gum pockets around the teeth). A regular cleaning may also be appropriate for a patient with a gum condition limited to gingivitis, or gum inflammation.

What is Scaling and Root Planing-D4341/4342?

Periodontal scaling and root planing is often referred to as a “deep cleaning.” A dentist will recommend scaling and root planing (SRP) when a patient shows signs of gum disease. These signs may include the finding of deeper gum pockets, loss of support for the teeth that is visible on x-rays, bleeding gums, and accumulation of plaque and tartar below the gums. SRP procedures are generally completed in quadrants (or sections of the mouth) and usually require the dentist or hygienist to numb the treatment area so that the crown and root surfaces of the teeth can be thoroughly scaled and contaminants removed.

What is Periodontal Maintenance-D4910?

A periodontal maintenance (PM) is defined as a procedure that is recommended “following periodontal treatment (such as scaling and root planing) and continues at varying intervals, determined by the clinical evaluation of the dentist.” PM is important because periodontal disease can recur without adequate follow up. PM includes removal of plaque and tartar above and below the gums, scaling and root planing of specific areas, and polishing. PM is always completed following active periodontal treatment such as scaling and root planing or more extensive gum surgery.

The type of cleaning you need-regular cleaning, deep cleaning or periodontal maintenance- is determined by your treating dentist based upon the clinical condition of your teeth and gums, as well as your history of periodontal disease and treatment.