



Benefits of Periodontal Maintenance

You have been diagnosed with periodontal disease. Your periodontal therapies have been completed. Congratulations! You know what causes gum disease, now **let's learn how to keep your disease under control.**



Gum disease is an infection caused by a number of different types of bacteria. **By removing these bacteria every day from all surfaces of the teeth and gums, you will not suffer from this disease.** However, for most of us, **it is impossible to keep a periodontal pocket, deeper than 4mm., cleaned out. A toothbrush, at best, only goes down 3-4mm.**

A periodontal maintenance (PM) appointment is much more than a preventative cleaning. At a PM appointment, the roots are cleaned and smoothed down to the bottom of the pockets (attachment level). All calculus is removed, above and below the gumline. Any infectious tissue that has returned is removed (like scrubbing a burn wound to promote healing). Oral medicated irrigants are used. Fluoride treatments are given, if needed, to kill bacteria and control sensitivity and decay. Extensive oral hygiene instructions are reviewed. **It is a much more meticulous and time-consuming process to not only clean around the crowns of the teeth, but also around and through all the roots.**

Many of our patients ask us why we recommend three-month intervals between periodontal maintenance appointments. Studies show that it takes 3 months for the destructive, non-oxygen loving (anaerobic) bacteria to develop and organize in the pockets deeper than 4mm. These non-oxygen-loving bacteria are much more aggressive and destroy the bone that holds your teeth in. **If these bacteria are not eliminated at least every 3 months, you are likely to have a bone infection and bone loss around your teeth,** which is the greatest cause of tooth loss after the age of 35.

A study was done on “hopeless” teeth. Instead of removing them as needed, they decided to see how long they would last. Every 3 months the patient returned for a periodontal maintenance appointment. **The average tooth lasted for an additional 8 years! Periodontal maintenance works!**

Periodontal disease is a lot like high blood pressure or diabetes. **You can lead a normal life and keep your teeth for a lifetime by controlling the disease.** You will never get rid of all the damages of the disease, and it is likely to return quickly if not controlled regularly. The 3-month periodontal maintenance appointment is like taking your needed medication, exercising and eating healthy.



Many of our patients are concerned about the cost. Almost all insurance companies pay for preventative or periodontal maintenance appointments 2 times per year. This is a great benefit. **There are many things in life that we value that are not covered by insurance.** Keeping your beautiful smile is one of these.