

## What Type of Dental Cleaning Do I Need?

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Just like when you go to the car wash, there are several types of cleanings based on the needs and the condition of your vehicle. In order to maintain and/or improve your oral health, different forms of dental cleanings may be recommended by your dentist and hygienist. Poor oral health can result in inflammation and bleeding, root exposure, bone loss, cavities, oral discomfort, halitosis, and even tooth loss. Your oral health also has a major impact on your overall general health. Poor oral health may reduce your overall immune system and increase your risk for heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and erectile dysfunction.

Based on the most current research, the American Dental Association (ADA) and American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) has updated their recommendations in regards to treating different forms of gingivitis and periodontal disease. A brief description of oral conditions and recommended treatment has been provided below.

### **Prophy**

A basic dental cleaning is referred to as a "Prophy" and stands for ***Prophylaxis*** meaning action taken to ***prevent*** disease. This preventative dental procedure involves cleaning debris, plaque, and calculus (hard mineral and bacteria deposit also known as tartar) along the tooth surfaces "***above***" the gum tissue. This procedure is performed to address gingivitis (gum infection) and help prevent periodontal (bone and gum) disease.

### **Scaling in the Presence of Moderate to Severe Inflammation**

When generalized moderate to severe inflammation of the gum tissue is present, a new procedure known as Scaling in the Presence of Moderate to Severe Inflammation is currently recommended. This procedure is performed when inflammation is present, but no bone loss. This procedure is similar to the Prophy, but includes removal of irritants (debris, plaque, calculus) "***above*** and "***below***" the gums. This procedure may require topical or local anesthetic to numb the tissues and provide comfort as needed during treatment.

### **Gross Debridement**

If it has been a while since you have had a dental cleaning, there may be a lot of buildup on your teeth and a more extensive cleaning called a Gross Debridement may be required to evaluate your condition.

### **Scaling & Root Planning**

If you have a history of ***bone loss*** due to an infection of the gum tissue and jaw bone called periodontitis, more in-depth treatment may be recommended to stabilize the condition. This may include a procedure called Scaling & Root Planning, or Periodontal Surgery by a specialist if the condition is severe. To remove irritants involved in this disease process, Scaling & Root Planning is extensive periodontal treatment that is done to remove debris, plaque, calculus, and toxins from the surfaces of the teeth both "***above*** and "***below***" the gums.

### **Periodontal Maintenance**

In order to maintain your oral health and reduce your risk of further bone loss and recession after Scaling & Root Planning or Periodontal Surgery, a more extensive cleaning called Periodontal Maintenance is recommended. Like Scaling & Root Planning, Periodontal Maintenance is an extensive cleaning performed "***above*** and "***below***" the gums, but with concentration in localized areas only. Besides a more extensive cleaning, the American Academy of Periodontology also recommend this form of periodontal therapy ***every 3 to 4 months*** to reduce your risk of further bone loss and recession, and reduce the potential need for future Scaling & Root Planning or additional Periodontal Surgery.

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