

Post Operative Instructions for Scaling and Root Planing

Most patients experience little or no discomfort after scaling and root planing. The most frequent complaints are: slight tenderness of the gum tissue, teeth that are mildly sensitive to cold drinks and foods, and discomfort when eating spicy foods. You may do the following to minimize any of these inconveniences:

Avoid eating spicy foods for several days.

Take an over-the-counter analgesic such as Advil or Alleve® before your local anesthesia wears off. Later, you can take the same medication if you have any tenderness of the gums. If you must avoid these analgesics because you are already taking NSAID's, are allergic to them, or you have ulcers, then you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Please follow dosage recommendations on the product labels.

You may rinse with warm salt water as often as you wish. Stir no more than 1/4 teaspoonful of table salt and 1/4 teaspoonful of baking soda into a cup of warm water to use as your rinse solution. This will help soothe any gum tissues that may be tender after the root planing procedure.

It is important to maintain good plaque control to promote optimal healing after scaling and root planing. Therefore, please perform all home care procedures as prescribed by your dentist or hygienist.

You may experience some discomfort when you drink cold liquids or eat cold foods. This sensitivity is the most common complaint after root planing and is due to removal of tartar and a minute amount of tooth root surface. Any sensitivity should gradually go away in a few weeks; however, in some cases, the sensitivity can take longer to go away. In rare cases, some permanent sensitivity results. Try to avoid really cold liquids and foods for a few days or more after the scaling and root planing is performed. If needed, you can use desensitizing toothpastes, such as Crest for Sensitive Teeth® or Sensodyne® to help reduce the sensitivity.

Please call the office if you experience any problems other than those listed above.