

# Mississauga Dental Specialists

*Braces Invisalign Teeth Gums & Implants*

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## **Periodontal Scaling & Root Planing**

The objective of scaling and root planing is to remove etiologic agents which cause inflammation to the gingival (gum) tissue and surrounding bone. Common etiologic agents removed by this conventional periodontal therapy include dental plaque and tartar (calculus).

These non-surgical procedures which completely cleanse the periodontium, work very effectively for individuals suffering from gingivitis (mild gum inflammation) and moderate/severe periodontal disease.

### **Reasons for scaling and root planing**

Scaling and root planing can be used both as a preventative measure and as a stand-alone treatment. These procedures are performed as a preventative measure for a periodontitis sufferer.

**These dental procedures may be necessary for the following reasons:**

- **Disease prevention** – The oral bacteria which cause periodontal infections can travel via the bloodstream to other parts of the body. Research has shown that lung infections and heart disease have been linked to periodontal bacteria. Scaling and root planing remove bacteria and halts periodontal disease from progressing, thus preventing the bacteria from traveling to other parts of the body.
- **Tooth protection** – When gum pockets exceed 3mm in depth, there is a greater risk of periodontal disease. As pockets deepen, they tend to house more colonies of dangerous bacteria. Eventually, a chronic inflammatory response by the body begins to destroy gingival and bone tissue which may lead to tooth loss. Periodontal disease is the number one cause of tooth loss in the developed world.
- **Aesthetic effects** – Scaling and root planing help remove tartar and plaque from the teeth and below the gumline. As an added bonus, if superficial stains are present on the teeth, they will be removed in the process of the scaling and root planing procedure.
- **Better breath** – One of the most common signs of periodontal disease is halitosis (bad breath). Food particles and bacteria can cause a persistent bad odour in the oral cavity which is alleviated with cleaning procedures such as scaling and root planing.

## **What do scaling and root planing treatments involve?**

Scaling and root planing treatments are only performed after a thorough examination of the mouth. The dentist will take X-rays, conduct visual examinations and make a diagnosis before recommending or beginning these procedures.

Depending on the current condition of the gums, the amount of calculus (tartar) present, the depth of the pockets and the progression of the periodontitis, local anesthetic may be used.

- **Scaling** – This procedure is usually performed with special dental instruments and may include an ultrasonic scaling tool. The scaling tool removes calculus and plaque from the surface of the crown and root surfaces. In many cases, the scaling tool includes an irrigation process that can also be used to deliver an antimicrobial agent below the gums that can help reduce oral bacteria.
- **Root Planing** – This procedure is a specific treatment which serves to remove cementum and surface dentin that is embedded with unwanted microorganisms, toxins and tartar. The root of the tooth is literally smoothed in order to promote good healing. Having clean, smooth root surfaces helps bacteria from easily colonizing in future.

Following these deep cleaning procedures, the gum pockets may be treated with antibiotics. This will soothe irritation and help the gum tissues to heal quickly.

During the next appointment, the dentist or hygienist will thoroughly examine the gums again to see how well the pockets have healed. If the gum pockets still measure more than 3mm in depth, additional and more intensive treatments may be recommended.

***If you have any concerns or questions about scaling and root planing, or periodontal disease, please contact our office.***