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SCALING & ROOT PLANING WITH LASER ASSISTED DISINFECTION

This was previously known as a “deep cleaning.” Today, the procedure has been significantly improved using the most up-to-date technology for treating gum disease, ultrasonic cleaners and the CO2 laser. First, the accumulation of biofilm (i.e. saliva and bacteria) on the root surfaces below your gum line is thoroughly removed (planed) with ultrasonic and hand instruments. The laser is then used to disinfect the pockets and remove a thin layer of diseased gum tissue. Finally, the pockets are flushed out using an antiseptic rinse in a micro syringe and antibiotics are often prescribed.

In periodontal infections such as yours, the gum tissue surrounding the teeth has actually become disconnected from the roots because of the toxic by-products released by the bacteria. This creates deep, inaccessible pockets or spaces that you cannot reach with the tools you would typically use at home. Laser assisted periodontal therapy helps the gums to re-connect back to the tooth roots. It also reduces gingival bleeding, decreases inflammation (a risk factor in cardiovascular disease) and makes the pockets less deep. The goal is to eliminate the infection and allow you better access to clean these important areas.

When the topical and/or local anesthetic wears off, you may experience slight tenderness around the treated teeth for several days. Increased sensitivity to hot and cold is also a common finding. If present, it may last for several weeks. This is the normal course of healing and should not be cause for concern.

There are several things that you can do to help reduce or prevent tooth sensitivity and to maximize the healing potential following this treatment. These include:

1. thorough cleaning on a daily basis using a battery-assisted toothbrush, dental floss and a water irrigator. Proper home care is the personal responsibility of each patient. Its importance cannot be over-emphasized;
2. daily rinses with an antiseptic (*chlorhexidine*) mouth rinse for two weeks following treatment;
3. use of a desensitizing toothpaste (e.g. *Sensodyne* or *Crest Sensitivity Protection*) in place of your regular toothpaste for a month after the procedure; and
4. taking any antibiotic prescriptions that may have been prescribed to you.

The results of laser assisted periodontal therapy are almost always beneficial. However, this therapy by itself is not always sufficient to stop the continued destruction of some forms of periodontal disease. Consequently, about 3 months after this treatment is completed, the doctor will re-assess the health of your gums and discuss with you any additional options at that time.

Please call the office if you have any questions or problems.