

"I Just Want My Teeth Cleaned"

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Many new patients call our office for a first dental appointment, saying, "I just want my teeth cleaned." This is a fair request in that most people who desire this service are actually in need of it to one degree or another. However, this presents a problem in that it is impossible to determine the extent of procedures needed to get the teeth clean and gums healthy from merely a phone conversation. It can only be determined from an in-person comprehensive oral examination that includes an office periodontal (gum) assessment. This is the approach we take at our health-centered, wellness based dental practice.

Having clean teeth embodies a lot more than just a "sparkling smile." True teeth cleanliness involves not only what is seen above the gums, but it also has to do with what's "down under," where bacterial action, inflammation and infection can reside, most often without the patient even being aware of it. Unfortunately, people with teeth that have periodontal disease to the point of looseness never experience pain from it. This is why it is so important to assess the situation at the initial oral examination and discuss options for treatment before jumping in with the first teeth cleaning. In a health-centered practice the primary purpose of its hygiene department is to support the fundamental mission of the practice, which is patient health and education. If we spend enough time in the beginning stages to educate patients about their oral health, we can avoid wasting it in the future. This is why we take the time to individually assess and diagnose each new patient prior to prescribing an appropriate plan for their teeth cleaning/periodontal health development needs. It begins with a periodontal evaluation and diagnosis consisting of pocket measuring and phase microscopic assessment by the Doctor. A thorough periodontal program in our office consists of:

1. Oral cancer examination with a technology that can determine oral pre-cancer and cancer.
2. Dental examination.
3. Review of Findings report of present oral situation.
4. Oral hygiene assessment, dexterity evaluation and instruction.
5. Initial and follow up microscopic bacterial evaluation.
6. Oral biofilm analysis – plaque from cheeks, gums and from between the teeth and gums are sent to a laboratory to determine the type and amount of bad bacteria.
7. Continuing "Report Card," especially of troublesome areas to guide you during the time between maintenance appointments.

Essentially, you will be given treatment by a dedicated hygienist who is interested in your continued oral health and is genuinely committed to this goal. By not limiting our periodontal treatment to just a "teeth cleaning," we are in a position to not only help develop healthy mouths and improve the state of our patients general health, we can in some cases even save lives.