

No gum disease, please!

Regular dental check-ups are vital.

Periodontal (gum) disease is a chronic bacterial infection of the gums and bone supporting the teeth. It is caused by certain bacteria that are found on the teeth and in spaces between the teeth and gums.

Diagnosing gum disease and getting appropriate treatment is important. Why? Because if left untreated, the disease can progress, which may lead to tooth loss. The good news is that gum disease is treatable. And like many other health conditions, the earlier you diagnose and treat, the better the outcome. On top of that, mounting research continues to show that gum disease may have an effect on several serious health conditions. This means that having **regular dental check-ups**, receiving needed **treatment**, and taking **proper care** of your teeth and gums at home is important not only for your mouth; but also for your overall well-being.

Regular dental check-ups are important to maintaining oral and overall health. When you visit the dentist for regular examinations and cleanings, gum disease can be caught *before* expensive treatment becomes necessary.



- **If your gum health is generally good, the dentist may recommend a prophylaxis, or “regular cleaning,” once or twice per year.** A prophylaxis (D1110*) is considered a preventive procedure where the dentist or hygienist removes plaque, tartar, and stains from the teeth.
- **If you show signs of gum disease, however, a dentist may recommend periodontal scaling and root planing (PSRP), also called a “deep cleaning.”** Clinical signs of gum disease may include deeper gum pockets, loss of supporting bone visible on x-rays, bleeding gums, and plaque and tartar below the gumline. PSRP procedures (D4341/D4342*) are generally completed over multiple appointments to treat the different quadrants (or sections) of the mouth. The dentist or hygienist may numb the areas before treatment, and medication may be recommended to control infection and pain.

Your dentist determines the type of cleaning you need (“regular” or “deep”) based on the clinical condition of your teeth and gums, and whether you’ve had gum disease before. Discuss with your dentist any questions you have about the type of cleaning recommended for you. You can also get a second opinion.* call CIGNA customer service at the number located on your dental ID card, and a representative will help you make arrangements.

Proper home care of your teeth and gums can also reduce your risk for gum disease. Frequent tooth brushing is an important part of protecting your teeth and gums. It is generally recommended that you spend two minutes brushing at least two times a

day. Since brushing does not reach between the teeth, using dental floss or other types of interdental cleaners is recommended at least once daily. Both activities remove plaque, a thin sticky film of bacteria that covers your teeth after meals and snacks.

For healthy teeth and gums: brush and floss daily, eat a balanced diet, and visit your dentist regularly.



* Please refer to your plan materials for details on coverage for specific procedures and applicable patient charges.

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