



### “WHY CAN’T I JUST HAVE A CLEANING?”

That’s a question we hear frequently and, hopefully, this explanation will clear the air.

Fifteen or twenty years ago, before even most dentist understood about gum disease, all our patients were given “cleanings”. It was the general term we used to describe all the various procedures a hygienist performed- even though we knew there was a big difference between doing a “cleaning” for a 20 year old with a slight amount of food deposits and a 55 year old with extensive hardened deposits deep below the gum line. In order to clear up the confusion, the dental profession has set down some clear definitions for the various gum procedures we perform.

A “cleaning” is, essentially, the removal of some slight deposit build up and a polishing of the teeth that is usually done on children and young adults.

A “scaling” is the removal of more extensive deposits both above and below the gum line, usually associated with bleeding and plaque bacteria.

A “periodontal scaling” is the removal of very hardened and very deep deposits below the gum line. This procedure is usually done over three or four sessions, with local anesthetic.

A “maintenance scaling” is a follow up procedure performed, usually, every 3 to 4 months on patients who have been through a series of “periodontal scaling” or who are on routine care for moderate gum problems.

So, if you’re an adult, and you have any degree of gum problems, a “cleaning” just won’t do the job.

***About Dental Insurance:*** Every insurance policy is different and every insurance company has different policies regarding what they will pay for and what they won’t. Very often that decision is ***not*** based on what ***you need*** or what is ***best for you***. Those are financial decisions based on what is in the best interest of the insurance company. ***Please*** keep this in mind when making decisions about ***your*** dental health.