

Deep Cleaning Teeth (Scaling & Root Planing): What to Expect & Recovery Checklist

Everything you need before, during, and after your deep cleaning — prepared by the team at Stone Creek Village Dentistry.

Stone Creek Village Dentistry · 463 Canyon Del Rey Blvd, Del Rey Oaks, CA 93940 · (831) 920-6900

What Is a Deep Cleaning?

A deep cleaning — clinically called **scaling and root planing** — removes plaque and hardened tartar from tooth surfaces **above and below the gumline**, then smooths the tooth roots so your gums can reattach and heal. It is the standard first-line treatment for gum disease. A regular cleaning **maintains** healthy gums; a deep cleaning **treats** unhealthy ones.

Do You Need One? The Pocket-Depth Scale

At your exam we probe six points around each tooth and measure gum "pocket" depth in millimeters:

1–3 mm	Healthy gums. A regular cleaning every 6 months is all you need.
4–5 mm	Early gum disease. Bacteria have detached the gum from the tooth — a deep cleaning is recommended.
6 mm+	Advanced periodontitis. Deep cleaning plus possible localized antibiotics; we'll discuss the full plan.

Gum disease is usually painless in its early stages — most people discover it at a checkup, not from symptoms.

Warning Signs to Watch For

- Bleeding when brushing or flossing
- Red, swollen, or tender gums
- Persistent bad breath or a bad taste
- Gums pulling away from the teeth (recession)
- Teeth that look longer or feel loose

Why act early: a deep cleaning today costs a fraction of the bone grafts, extractions, and dental implants that untreated gum disease eventually requires.

What Happens During the Procedure

- 1 Numbing & mapping.** We numb the treatment area with local anesthetic and take X-rays to map tartar and bone levels.
- 2 Scaling.** Fine hand instruments and an ultrasonic scaler remove plaque and tartar above and below the gumline, inside the pockets.
- 3 Root planing.** Root surfaces are smoothed so bacteria can't easily reattach and the gum can seal back against the tooth.
- 4 Rinse & medicate.** Treated areas are rinsed; deeper pockets may receive an antimicrobial rinse or localized antibiotic.
- 5 Recheck.** We treat two quadrants per visit (60–90 minutes); you return in about a week to finish the other half.

Most patients feel pressure and vibration rather than pain. Sedation options are available for anxious patients.

What It Costs

Item	Typical Range	Notes
Per quadrant (¼ of mouth)	\$150–\$350	Priced per quadrant
Full-mouth deep cleaning	\$600–\$1,400	Depends on pocket depth
With dental insurance	Covered in part	Most plans pay a large share; we verify benefits first

Your Recovery Checklist

First 24–48 Hours

- ☐ Wait until numbness wears off (~2 hours) before eating
- ☐ Choose soft, cool foods; avoid hot, crunchy, or spicy items
- ☐ Take over-the-counter pain relievers as directed if needed
- ☐ Avoid smoking and vigorous rinsing
- ☐ Brush gently with a soft-bristled brush — don't skip

Days 3–7

- ☐ Resume normal brushing and daily flossing, gently
- ☐ Use any prescribed antimicrobial rinse on schedule
- ☐ Expect pinker, less-bleeding gums
- ☐ Attend your second appointment to finish remaining quadrants

Weeks 2–4 & Beyond

- ☐ Use sensitivity toothpaste if teeth react to cold
- ☐ Keep your follow-up visit so we can re-probe healing pockets
- ☐ Begin periodontal maintenance cleanings every 3–4 months
- ☐ Brush twice daily, floss once daily — this is what makes results last

When to Call Us

Contact us at **(831) 920-6900** if you notice: pain that worsens after day 3, bleeding that doesn't slow after 4–5 days, fever or swelling that spreads, or a spot that stays sharply painful when chewing.

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Appointment Notes

Use this space at your visit — jot down pocket measurements, treated quadrants, and your next appointment.

Keeping the Results

A deep cleaning resets your gum health — maintenance keeps it that way:

- **Periodontal maintenance every 3–4 months** (not the standard 6-month recall)
- **Daily brushing and flossing** — the only way to control bacteria between visits
- **Don't smoke** — smoking is the strongest modifiable risk factor for recurrence
- **Re-probing at follow-ups** confirms pockets are healing; healthy pockets may eventually return you to a standard schedule

Trusted resources: American Dental Association — *MouthHealthy* (mouthhealthy.org) · CDC Oral Health (cdc.gov/oral-health) · American Academy of Periodontology — *For Patients* (perio.org/for-patients)

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