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Dear Patient,

Thank you for your efforts during the active phase of your nonsurgical periodontal treatment (e.g. scaling and root planing). You are now ready for the important maintenance phase to monitor and stabilize the health of your gums.

What Is the Importance of Maintenance Therapy?

Periodontal disease can easily recur. The bacteria that caused the infection are still present in your mouth and are always ready to attack the teeth, bone and gum tissues. Maintenance therapy is an absolute necessity to insure that the periodontal infection does not re-activate. For most people, maintenance therapy should occur every 3-4 months, and is an extension of active periodontal treatment.

Your immune response, genetic predisposition, medical status and tobacco use contribute to your periodontal health status and risk for recurrence. It is because of these factors that **periodontal disease is not curable**. However, in most cases, **it is controllable**, and that is why close monitoring with maintenance therapy is so important. Everyone responds differently to treatment. Factors to determine your follow-up care include:

1. Clinical signs of control of infection
2. Degree of residual pocket depth and bone loss
3. Effectiveness of bacterial plaque control
4. Individual susceptibility, immune system response
5. Health, medications, age and other risk factors including smoking, diet, and nutrition

Why Should You Have Periodontal Maintenance Instead of Prophylaxis?

A prophylaxis is the type of cleaning that many people have every 6 months. This type of cleaning is meant to prevent gum disease and tooth decay. It includes the removal of plaque, tartar, and stains from above the gums and polishing the teeth. This type of cleaning is helpful for people who have gingivitis (mild inflammation of the gums due to plaque buildup), but does little to help those who have active periodontal disease.

Periodontal Maintenance is a type of personalized patient care that occurs every 3-4 months. It includes removal of bacterial plaque and tartar from above and beneath the gums, site specific scaling and root planing where indicated, and polishing the teeth. The dental hygienist determines changes made in your gum attachment depths and may provide you with antimicrobial therapy as needed. The hygienist also evaluates your home care and gives you suggestions of tools or techniques if improvement is needed. The increased attention to periodontal disease control that is evident in a periodontal maintenance appointment is meant to help you retain the health of your teeth and gums for a lifetime.

Thank you for choosing our office for your dental care.

Dr. Burchfield, Dr. Melton and staff