

Frequently Asked Questions

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FINANCIAL

- Are you a provider for my insurance?

At present, we have a preferred provider agreement with the following dental benefit programs: Aetna, Blue Cross, Cigna, Delta Dental, Guardian, Health Spring, Met Dental, Principal, Southland and United Concordia. For those companies, we have contracted to provide services at an agreed upon fee structure. We will file your claim with any benefit plan.

- Why do I have to pay?

Dental benefit plans are not like most insurance as they only cover a portion of your dental expenses. They are, at best, a rebate plan which may cover some of your dental treatment expenses up to a yearly limit, usually around \$1000-1500. We estimate your co-payment based on the information they provide and our experience. Please ask for a copy of our Dental Insurance brochure for more information.

- What will my insurance cover?

A dental benefit plan is a contract between you or your employer and an insurance company. The terms of that contract determine your eligibility for services and the services covered. We utilize the information provided to us by the plan administrator to determine what your benefit plan may cover and what your co-payment may be.

- How much will my co-payment be?

Your dental benefit plan determines your co-payment. We utilize the fee schedule they provide to estimate your co-payment. Some or all of your treatment needs may not be a covered expense and we will try our best to let you know how much your out-of-pocket expense will be.

➤ Why do I have a co-payment?

There are some procedures that may not require co-payment, depending on the dental benefit plan. However, your dental benefit plan contract determines what procedures they may cover and your co-payment. It is part of our contractual agreement to collect a co-payment.

➤ Can I make payments?

We accept all major credit cards, checks and cash. We can help you apply for a healthcare payment program from CareCredit or you can apply online from our website. Any other arrangements are at the discretion of the Office Manager.

DIAGNOSTICS

➤ Why do I need x-rays?

In order to have the information needed for a diagnosis, x-rays of the teeth and surrounding bone are required. Please ask for a copy of our Dental Radiographs brochure for more information.

➤ Why are so many x-rays needed?

A complete radiographic series of twenty-one images gives us the most detailed and best information for assessment of your periodontal health. Alternatively, a panoramic radiograph supplemented with individual x-ray images may be adequate. If your family dentist has radiographs to share, we can determine if they will be adequate for our use.

➤ Are that many x-rays safe?

Dental x-rays are one of the lowest radiation dose studies performed. A routine exam which includes 4 bitewings is about 0.005 mSv, which is less than one day of natural background radiation. It is also about the same amount of radiation exposure from a short airplane flight (~1-2 hrs). The American Dental Association recommends that patients who are not having problems have dental x-rays performed every two years. Patients with higher risk for dental disease (cavities and gum disease) may need more frequent examination. Proper shielding is also common, which makes the potential risk even lower. Please see our Dental Radiographs brochure.

➤ Why didn't my dentist tell me about my periodontal problems before?

There are many risk factors that may affect the severity and progression of periodontal disease. Our concern is your present condition and how we can best move you toward better periodontal health. You can learn more about risk factors associated with periodontal disease by visiting our website and clicking on the link 'What's Your Dental Score?'

➤ What are risk and disease scores?

Information from your examination is used to determine your risk and disease status. Your risk score helps determine the likelihood that your oral health will deteriorate without treatment. Your disease score tells us how healthy your gum tissue is today.

TREATMENT

- Do I need to start treatment now?

Gum disease is caused by colonies of bacteria setting up shop below your gums. Your body's response to these bacteria causes deterioration of the bone and tissue surrounding your teeth causing gum pockets. As these pockets of infection grow deeper, more bone is destroyed. Because of this, the sooner the problem is addressed, the less costly and more predictable the treatment tends to be.

- Do you use a laser for gum treatments?

When indicated, we can offer laser gum treatments using a protocol developed specifically for periodontal disease called LANAP. Please visit our website to view a brief animation of the procedure. We will be happy to go over options for treatment at the consultation visit.

- Will I always need to see a periodontist?

Depending on your periodontal health status and your risk factors, it may be in your best interest to be seen by a periodontist on a regular basis. By using new technology for monitoring periodontal disease, we can help you track changes, much like your blood pressure, blood sugar or cholesterol levels are monitored.

- Why do I need to have my teeth cleaned every 3 months?

Gum disease is a chronic condition and complete resolution of the disease may not be possible. By providing more frequent care and by monitoring your risk and disease scores, we can keep you informed of the status of conditions affecting your teeth and gums.

- What is the difference between your cleaning and my dentist's cleaning?

You should expect similar services with regard to maintenance/preventive care. The terminology used may differ, but the goal remains the same-that of helping you maintain or improve your existing oral health status. Your hygienist should review your medical health status, screen for conditions which may be causing you problems now, review factors that may cause future problems, clean and polish your teeth with concentration on problem areas, review your home care and provide advice on what you can do to lessen the likelihood that conditions affecting your teeth and gums will worsen.

- Why do I need to see a family dentist?

You may require services not provided by periodontists. You need your family dentist to help you with fillings, crowns, extractions, root canals, partials, etc.

➤ Why do I need an electric toothbrush?

Power or electric toothbrushes are like any tool you would use to do a job more efficiently. Several studies also show the superiority of power toothbrushes in effectiveness when compared to manual toothbrushes. We recommend them for that reason.

➤ What is a “deep cleaning” versus a regular cleaning?

Sometimes the periodontal maintenance visit is thought of as a “deep cleaning”, but we generally reserve that term to describe a treatment called periodontal scaling or root planing where the dentist or hygienist cleans below the gum line. Numbing is usually required, but some people tolerate it well without being numbed.

➤ Why may my bite need adjusting?

Periodontal disease affects the supporting structures of the teeth and can cause them to shift a little when you bite together. That stress on the bone surrounding teeth can contribute to more damage. Adjustment of the bite (like when you have a new filling or crown adjusted to feel right) reduces that tooth movement to help with healing.

➤ Do you put people to sleep for treatment?

Periodontal treatment is minimally invasive and local anesthesia is all that is normally required. If you would feel more comfortable, we can offer nitrous oxide/laughing gas. We can also offer a prescription for a sedative, but you will need someone to bring you to the appointment, drive you home and stay with you until the effects wear off.

➤ Will I need to take off work for treatment?

Most people resume their daily activities after treatment. Following your post-treatment care instructions is important.

➤ What other services do periodontists provide and where can I get more information?

Please visit our website at www.montgomeryperiodontics.com. Perform your own oral health status assessment by clicking on the link ‘What’s Your Dental Score?’ View brief animated videos by clicking on the ‘Dental Wizard’ link. Download our free app from the app store of your smartphone either by clicking the link, searching your store for ‘Periodontist’ or by scanning the QR code at the bottom of the page. Please feel free to call us at 334-271-6333 or 800-489-6333 or email us at info@stevedavidmd.com.

