

## ORAL HYGIENE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING LASER PERIODONTAL THERAPY

Patients want to know when they can return to normal oral hygiene practices. This varies from patient to patient because healing varies from patient to patient. The following are some LOOSE oral hygiene guidelines that you can follow:

1. You can start using a soft manual toothbrush upon doctor instructions following the surgery. Brush the teeth by placing the bristles of the brush on the gums below the tooth and carefully rolling the bristles toward the tooth surface. Do not stick the bristles into the gums. Your favorite toothpaste can be used.

If there is a fibrin (whitish looking) or red tissue clot still present or if the tissue does not look right you cannot brush yet.

2. Flossing only above the gumline can begin at 2-4 weeks following laser therapy.
3. Electric toothbrushes can be used 4-6 weeks following treatment but no attachment should be used that gets underneath the gum until at least 3-6 months has passed. The tissue needs to be mature and strong enough for flossing and the electric toothbrush. Remember that it is critical that the area that had laser therapy not be disturbed for a number of months.
4. Oral irrigators such as the Waterpik cannot be used until 3-6 months have passed and should not be directed down into the gums until at least 6 months following laser treatment.
5. Antimicrobial rinses such as Chlorhexidine, Peridex or Perioguard should be used twice a day while you are not brushing. In some cases this may be 2 weeks or more. Following the use of the antimicrobial rinse you should switch to a rinse such as Listerine or another ADA (American Dental Association) approved rinse such as Walmart's Equate Blue Mint. These rinses should be used on a daily basis especially at bedtime. We have found that it is advantageous to brush with these rinses. To do this pour a small amount into a small container and dip the toothbrush in the rinse and brush with it for at least 2 minutes. Many times this avoids staining.

Do not have your teeth cleaned at your dentist's office until Dr. Rabalais says it is okay to do so. In addition when you have your teeth cleaned at your dentist's office be sure that the hygienist does not probe or use any instrument that goes below the gum margin in the laser treated areas.

If you have any questions at all do not hesitate to contact our office.