

# Importance of Regular Exams

## Regular check-ups important

We recommend a check-up every six months so we can identify and prevent a variety of oral health problems.

## Steps in a regular exam

Each visit will be different based on your situation, but generally, check-ups include several steps. We start by reviewing your concerns, dental chart, and medical history so we can determine the most appropriate care for you.

The check-up also includes cleaning your teeth. This enables us to clearly see the condition of your teeth and gums and to remove the plaque, tartar and bacteria that cause tooth decay and gum disease. If needed, we polish your teeth to smooth their surfaces and to remove light stains.



*Red, swollen gums*

A regular check-up includes a careful visual exam of your mouth. We check for decay on the biting surfaces of teeth, signs of wear, cracks, or other problems with restorations such as fillings and crowns, as well as any abnormal loss of tooth structure.

In addition, we check the color and contours of your gums. Red, swollen gums are often signs of gingivitis or periodontal disease. We use a periodontal probe to check the depth of the spaces between your teeth and gums. Readings deeper than 3 millimeters often indicate periodontal disease.

We also diagnose any sores or lesions on the soft tissues of your mouth, screening them for signs of oral cancer.



*Removing plaque*

Other conditions cannot be easily seen, so we often take x-rays. X-rays show us decay between and inside the teeth and tartar on the teeth and tooth roots. X-rays also show us signs of periodontal disease, such as the loss of bone around the teeth. In addition, x-rays allow us to see cysts, abscesses, and other problems.

We may also examine your jaw joint to help diagnose problems with your bite or TMJ. Sometimes check-ups include additional treatments based on your individual situation.

We review your homecare routine and give you advice on a good diet for maintaining good oral health and a beautiful smile.

Regular check-ups are important because neglecting dental conditions can lead to much more serious problems, such as—

- ❖ infected teeth.
- ❖ tooth loss and shifting teeth.
- ❖ receding gums.
- ❖ loss of bone in the jaw.
- ❖ painful jaw joints.

With regular exams, we can detect problems early and help you maintain your oral and overall health.