

At Maitland Dental Care you are able to see the dentist of your choice. Our aim is to deliver quality dental care and to maintain your oral health at an optimum level for as long as you attend our practice. To do so we encourage you to return at regular intervals for reviews and dental hygiene treatments so that we can monitor your teeth and gums and keep them as healthy as possible between visits. A healthy mouth is less likely to require expensive dental work.

What is a Dental Hygienist?

A dental hygienist is an ancillary member of the dental team who has studied at a tertiary level (usually a Bachelor of Oral Health). They are qualified to monitor and care for the teeth and gums. They can take x-rays when required and work closely with the dentist who will examine the mouth and develop treatment plans in consultation with the patient.

Why is it a good idea to have a scale and clean regularly?

Many people only require a scale and clean every 6 months or even once a year. In that time calculus (minerals from your saliva that harden on your teeth) can build up around your gums causing inflammation and bleeding. Harmful bacteria harbour in the rough calculus layer. These bacteria can produce toxins that can harm the gums and supporting bone as well as the acids that cause tooth decay.

Do I get calculus?

Most people will develop calculus on their teeth even if they are cleaning their teeth well. Other people who have trouble breathing through their noses (such as snorers) will develop calculus much faster and are more prone to gum diseases.

What if my saliva is too acid?

If you find your teeth seem to be wearing down, it may be that your saliva is too acid. This softens your tooth enamel so that grinding of the teeth or “bruxism” (which most of us do without knowing when we sleep) happens more quickly. This is often the case if you suffer from reflux. Your dental hygienist can test the acidity of your mouth with a simple pH test and give you tips on how to manage the problem before it becomes too severe. If the tooth wear is significant the dentist may suggest building your teeth up again with restorations. If this is necessary then your teeth will require long-term surveillance to prevent recurrence. Regular visits to your dental hygienist are an essential component of dental maintenance and preventative care.

What does a dental hygienist do?

Your dental hygienist will check your gums to make sure they are healthy and that you have no unusually deep pockets (unhealthy spaces between the tooth root and the gum). They will also check for gum inflammation and bleeding. They may check for acidity of the saliva. If this is a dental maintenance visit they will compare their observations with your previous visits. They will update your x-rays if necessary. If your dental hygienist has concerns about the health of your gums they may give you advice on better ways to clean your teeth at home. The dentist will come to see you to review your dental hygienist’s observations and to carefully check your teeth. They may discuss treatment options with you if dental work is required.

But I clean my teeth regularly at home myself!

Our dental hygienist will gently remove the calculus off your teeth for you with special instruments. It is not possible to do this yourself with a toothbrush even with an excellent technique. If the calculus is removed regularly less damage will occur to your teeth and gums over time because the bacteria will have less places to hide. They will then polish your teeth so that when you leave your teeth will feel great.