How Does a Tooth Polishing Procedure Work?

Smooth, shiny, stain-free teeth are a real confidence booster, and one way to achieve a bright, attractive smile is through tooth polishing.

The dental hygienists at Simply Dental Hygiene Care & Wellness offer a polish as the final stage of a routine dental visit.

Cleaning and Polishing Teeth

When layers of plaque build up on teeth, they harden and form a tough mineral substance called tartar. We refer to it as calculus. Bacteria can live within tartar and cause dental diseases. During your regular cleaning at Simply Dental Hygiene & Wellness, the dental hygienist removes tartar in a procedure called scaling. After scraping off the hard tartar with special instruments, the hygienist polishes the teeth. Dental polishing can remove surface stains on teeth and leaves them shiny and smooth, putting the finishing touches on preventive dental treatment. However, if you're looking for a much more noticeable change in tooth color, other whitening options might be more appropriate.

Tooth Polishing Procedures

Tooth polishing is a painless dental procedure, and some patients enjoy it. The dental hygienist usually uses a small, soft rubber cup and polishing paste. If you have severe stains, she may use an air-polishing system, a jet of pressurized air and water mixed with an abrasive agent.

Polishing Pastes for Teeth

Tooth polishing pastes are called prophy pastes, an abbreviation of prophylaxis, which refers to the preventive, disease-preventing effects of tooth cleaning and polishing. Your dental hygienist at Simply Dental Hygiene & Wellness may choose between fine, medium, and coarse grit pastes to fill the rubber cup that delivers the paste to the tooth surface. Coarse and medium pastes are most effective at removing surface stains. However, they can also microscopically scratch and roughen the tooth enamel, making it easier to develop stains later. Fine pastes are less damaging and create a more highly polished finish, but sometimes can be less effective at removing deeply embedded stains.