

Dental hygiene's pivot to prevention

Melissa Calhoun, MSDH, RDH

The evolution of dental hygiene is a testament to the profession's commitment to advancing preventive oral care. In 1907, Dr. Alfred Fones trained his cousin, Irene Newman, to educate parents on the importance of oral health care. In 1913, the first dental hygiene program was established by Dr. Fones, and the foundation for oral disease prevention was laid.¹

Minimally invasive, preventive treatment

Dental hygiene therapy has traditionally focused on routine cleanings, fluoride treatments, and patient education. However, with increased knowledge of the oral-systemic connection, we see more oral health professionals leaning toward a minimally invasive, preventive approach.

Clinical studies indicate that the most effective means of preventive dentistry is to focus on removing biofilm completely rather than heavier deposits first.² After a comprehensive assessment, disclosing the biofilm gives us a blueprint of where it's thriving so that removal is precise. Utilizing modern modalities to remove biofilm first is considered, followed by ultrasonic instrumentation only where hard deposits are detected. Hand scaling is limited to fine-scaling areas of deposits.

New hygiene modalities ensure the teeth are completely free of biofilm. As such, the risk of an acid attack upon eating is high. To counter this, a protective layer of fluoride is applied.

Fluoride for remineralization

Fluoride varnishes and tooth creams are ideal for addressing sensitivity and promoting remineralization after biofilm removal. Fluoride varnishes, such as Profluorid Varnish by VOCO,

strengthen enamel, create a protective barrier, and release fluoride over time, aiding remineralization. This fluoride varnish is thin and contains 5% sodium fluoride and xylitol in a nonmessy, single-dose delivery system, providing less waste in adult and child dosing.³ This varnish sets quickly in saliva and offers high immediate fluoride release. Its colorless formula makes it the perfect candidate for use after dental hygiene treatment.

Remin Pro, also from VOCO, is a water-based tooth cream enriched with essential minerals that offers a noninvasive approach to remineralizing enamel and preventing hypersensitivity.

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This tooth cream contains nano-hydroxyapatite (calcium and phosphate), fluoride, and xylitol.⁴ Nano-hydroxyapatite aids in filling in the superficial lesions on enamel surfaces caused by demineralization and erosion. To combat acid attacks and strengthen enamel, it contains 1,450 ppm sodium fluoride.⁴ The last ingredient, xylitol, is known for its bacteriostatic properties. Patients can use these tooth creams in custom trays or by brushing a pea-sized amount on their teeth. It is ideal during orthodontic treatment or after professional teeth whitening or dental therapy appointments.

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and a deeper understanding of oral health. The progression from prophylactic measures to a comprehensive approach reflects the profession's commitment to preventive care, and the use of disclosing solutions and meticulous biofilm removal exemplifies the contemporary approach to prevention.

Fluoride varnishes and tooth creams preserve natural tooth structure by promoting remineralization and addressing sensitivity, preventing oral diseases. As dental professionals embrace minimally invasive treatment, dentistry will undergo further refinements, ensuring a patient-centric, evidence-based, holistic approach to oral care. **RDH**

REFERENCES

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Melissa Calhoun, MSDH, RDH

Melissa is currently an instructor at Tarrant County College in Hurst, Texas, and has more than two decades of experience in different areas of dental hygiene, including pediatrics. Outside of clinical practice, she is an educator for Arm and Hammer Oral Care and the Swiss Dental Academy (SDA). She teaches National Board Dental Hygiene Examination reviews with Sanders Board Preparatory. Contact Melissa at mcalhounrdh@icloud.com or on Instagram @missyrdh.

