

How to Get a \$35,000 Increase for Each Hygienist with Sealants

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When possible, place sealants the same day they're diagnosed. People are busy. It's hard for parents to make appointments. Part of getting them to say 'Yes' to move forward is saying, "We know how busy you are. We will do everything we can to get these taken care of while you're here today." Our goal is same-day preventive procedures. The day sealants are diagnosed, in a perfect world, is the day they're sealed.

Overcoming the Time Obstacle: "We only schedule 30 minutes for our kids. We just can't possibly work that in."

Planning ahead will help you be able to provide same-day sealants. Have sealant setups in each operatory ready to go. 10 Ziploc baggies is all it takes. Put anything you'll need for sealants that isn't in your normal setup in those baggies. The moment you see potential for sealants all you have to do is open the drawer and pull out the baggie. You also want easy access to a curing light. Half the time wasted in dentistry is running around trying to find what is needed to get a procedure done. If you set it up in advance and have it in each hygiene operatory, you'll save minutes each time.

Radios

Radios are a quick, easy investment that can improve communication among the team and simplify same-day sealants. Put an earbud in your ear, clip a microphone to your jacket and slide the radio pack in your lab jacket pocket. If you don't have a curing light in your operatory, all you have to do is grab your lapel and say, "Can someone bring a curing light to Hygiene 3?" You don't have to get up and leave to go find what you need.

Early Discussion

Begin the discussion with the child's parent at the beginning of the appointment. Too often we wait until the end—after we've had the exam and know what needs to be done. If we do that, there's no time to do the sealant. If you have a radio, as soon as you notice the opportunity for sealants, "Can you have Mom step back to hygiene?" Someone then brings Mom back to where the kid is so you can say, "We've got great news. We've got eight teeth that can be protected with a sealant. I know how busy you are and how hard it is for you to get here. So we will bend over backwards to see if we can get these taken care of for you while you're here today." In the past, you may have put the sealants on the doctor's schedule because there are certain things he wants to have in place. But that's not always necessary. Begin the discussion with the parent at the beginning of the appointment and talk about the potential for sealants. Mom will usually ask, "How much does it cost and does my insurance cover it?" With the radio, let the front office know you need a quick estimate. If you have computers in the operatory, it's fairly simple to click on the teeth that need sealants to create a treatment plan. Then you go over that with mom. While all that goes on, do the prophylaxis. Usually my last comment to Mom is, "They will go over the estimate with you up front and she will let me know what you decide." It's not like we're pushing the patient to have that service done today. It's just an opportunity for them to have it done if they choose.

Using the Diagnodent to Give Patients What They Want

The Diagnodent is not about us or the numbers. We're all taught to recognize warning signs, and doctors were taught to diagnose decay, without the Diagnodent. But the Diagnodent is a powerful tool that patients find fascinating. It puts a real number on what we see, that patients can relate to and

understand. We finally have a way to prove there is a problem—not just say, “We see a problem”—especially when you use it with Intraoral Camera.

Sealants for Adults

Many hygienists think adult patients won't accept sealants. What we've found is, when you present them as an elective option, where it's optional and completely up to the patient, adults accept sealants all the time. This is especially true when you use the Diagnodent. As soon as that warning sound starts, the patient usually goes, “Uh-oh.” They can tell there's a problem—especially if you have them hold the unit. You can then say, “You're right. Something is starting in that groove. We have two options. We can wait for it to get worse, and put a filling there. Or we can place a sealant and, hopefully, prevent it from getting worse.” When you start using the Diagnodent with every adult, you'll be surprised at how many patients are interested in placing a sealant to prevent it from getting worse.

Never Before

When people ask why you haven't offered this before, the answer is, “New research shows that sealants are effective on children and adults.” “The ADA supports this service as a good benefit for children and adults.”

It Gets Worse

Because there is this exposed groove, something has started. We have two choices. Place the sealant, or wait until it gets worse and do a filling. It may take a number of years to get worse, but have no way to know for sure.

Hygiene Production

Sealants are a nice boost to hygiene productivity, while protecting patients' teeth. If you were to add four sealants a day, per hygienist, it would be a \$35,000 increase for each hygienist.

For more help with sealants, schedule a [free consultation](#) with Hygiene Diamonds.