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## Pointers from Pat on Presenting Perio Re-care

### Converting a 6-month prophy patient to a 3 month supportive periodontal therapy appointment.

The conversation for converting a prophy patient into a 3-month supportive perio therapy visit starts at the RDT (SRP) visit.

During RDT therapy, I save pieces of calculus and infected tissue. I gather it on a 2 x 2 and show the patient the infection that I am removing. They SEE the seriousness of their infection. Patients need to hear this multiple times about infection and the difficulty of them cleaning their own mouth to kill these bacteria.

During every RDT visit, I talk about their infection and how quickly bacteria forms and the number of germs in their mouth. I also talk about this at every 4910 visit. We must always be reinforcing and reminding because our patients forget as soon as they walk out the door.

Example; "Mrs. Patient, your mouth has over 500 different types of bacteria, and these germs divide and multiple all day long. At the end of a day, you can have up to 7 BILLION GERMS IN YOUR MOUTH! And if you have the genetic gene, you have 4 times the germs so that is 28 BILLION GERMS DAILY IN YOUR MOUTH! Even with perfect oral hygiene, it is almost impossible for you to keep your mouth germ free, right? This is where we come to your rescue because if you come in every 6-12 weeks, we can keep those germs from causing permanent damage to your mouth, especially since you have so many other factors adding to your gum disease. Such as your medications and dry mouth. At these 2-3 month visits, the procedure will be quite different than what you have experienced in the past because we are trying to help prevent you from needing this intensive procedure done more often or gum surgery. Research shows patients with gum disease need this gum infection therapy every 2 years along with a cleaning every 3 months. Our patients go 5-7 years without having to be retreated because we perform very different 2-3 month therapies for your gums ~ than just a "cleaning". Now we do have some patients who do need their gum infection retreated every 2 years and usually their total health, dry mouth, medications, etc. is a huge factor in their healing. We will get you using an electric toothbrush, a water pik, soft piks, and special rinses and gels for at home which will help you reduce your germ count and help with bad breath. Then when you come here every 2-3 months, we will get to those billions of germs to help keep you healthy. Does this make sense?

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(Word Picture for a Female; Kind of like how quickly our hair grows and we have to have our "roots" dyed:) (Word picture for a male; kind of like the algae and barnacles that build up on the bottom of your boat so quickly, right?) We will let your *numbers* tell us at each visit how healthy you are staying and where we need to work harder to keep you healthy. OK?"

At each 4910 visit, the hygienist needs to talk about what they are doing, areas of concern, and how we are treating today and irrigating, etc. to help them heal. I know small talk is important, and we must have some to build personal relationships with our patients. But I have found that when I go and teach that most of the conversations between the hygienist and patient are 80% personal and 20% dental. I recommend 80% dental and perio educational conversations and 20% personal. Our patients say they love coming because they learn so much every time they come in! That is what we want.

Remember to always speak from your heart and your patients will believe, trust and like you.

Contact Pat Worcester RDH, BS

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