

# A Reason to Smile!

News and Ideas For General Dentists

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DENTAL LAB

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## Practice Ideas: *Hygiene Headaches*

### The first thing to ask if production is slow is: "How is my hygiene schedule?"

A healthy hygiene schedule makes all the difference in treatment plans, patient loyalty, and, ultimately, practice success. Here are four questions and suggestions to improve your hygiene department.

- Are recalls getting done?** The typical practice sends a postcard the month the recall is due, and the patient gets forgotten if they don't schedule an appointment. Don't your patients deserve a phone call if they're overdue?
- Are you making the most of your hygienist's time?** When scheduling new patient hygiene, always add a few more minutes than recall visits. It's a good investment of time to get to know them. Also, balance the schedule with recalls and new patients so that a no-show or last minute cancellation doesn't ruin the whole day.
- How is your coding and perio protocol?** The American Association of Periodontics classifies perio treatment as 4 mm bleeding

pockets. Are you coding and treating as such? If not, what do you classify as perio?

- Are you taking advantage of technology?** If you are not using Wisdom, CASEY or some other system in conjunction with intra and extraoral photography, treatment plans are walking out the door.

Hygiene is the engine that drives your practice. Make sure it gets a regular tune-up.



## The Bottom Line: "Am I paying too much for Crowns?"

Price and cost are two distinctly different things. If you place an "economy" crown and spend an hour of chair time adjusting, your cost is significantly higher than your price.

When determining the "real" cost of your crowns, don't forget to include any extra chair time, lost opportunity costs (what else you could be doing), and the impact on your reputation and image. Here's a quick calculation:

Daily Production Goal	÷	Office Hours Per Day	=	Hourly Opportunity Cost
\$2,400	÷	8	=	\$300

If your daily production goal is \$2,400 (not including hygiene), and you work 8 hours that day, the value of each hour of your time is \$300. For each hour you spend doing something other than

production, you lose \$300. If you spend 30 minutes adjusting that \$85 "economy" crown, your total cost is \$235! ...\$85 + \$150 (1/2 hour). That's not accounting for your staff's wasted time and frustration, or the lost referral from the patient. Suddenly that cheap crown isn't so cheap!

However!...a recent study by *Lab Management Today* magazine found that high-prices did not necessarily translate into great crowns. In fact, some of the worst rated crowns in their study were the highest priced. So, paying big bucks doesn't guarantee a great result, and paying discount prices doesn't always save you money.

The bottom line is, it's important to figure in all the "soft" costs associated with prescribing, placing and caring for that crown when deciding if you're paying too much.

## Dental Stocks 52 Low 52 High

Colgate Symbol	66.65 CL	54.0	67.1
Patterson Symbol	33.10 PDCO	29.6	39.76
Amer Dental Partners Symbol	20.53 ADPI	13.0	21.1
Dentsply Symbol	30.61 XRAY	27.7	33.76
Hnry Schein Symbol	51.40 HSIC	44.4	54.3
Nat Dentex Symbol	16.95 NADX	16.0	24.5

## Hot Off The Press

Zirconia! It's the buzzword at all the dental shows...splattered throughout all the journals...and most importantly, patients are starting to ask for it. But what exactly is it?

Zirconia is the culmination of a decades-long effort to combine flexural strength and translucency. It is milled using CAD/CAM technology, and at 1200MPa, has twice the strength of gold, and four times the strength of all-ceramic pressed glass.

Zirconia is fabricated into the substructure for crowns and long-span bridges, then layered with fine porcelain, the same as metal.

Copings are so translucent, light actually passes through for a more lifelike appearance.

Brands such as WhiteRock™, Lava™, EMax™, and Invision™ are becoming the standard for anterior restorations, and rapidly moving to the posterior.

Ask your lab to see a sample.

The Quote "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of others." Charles Dickens