

# The Pleasure Palace

Is the dental office getting a reputation for being a “pleasure palace”? For some of us, the answer is yes. Many heroes go above and beyond their obligations to just clean teeth.

In my travels I speak to various dental hygiene groups and also have the privilege to talk one-on-one. I am constantly fascinated with hygienists who take that “extra step.” What I mean is that they continue the nurturing process beyond the scope of dental hygiene to make patients feel comfortable and special. Why do we do that? I’ve named us the Florence Nightingales of Dentistry.

I was recently talking with Marianne Fujimoto, RDH, from California, who is a Reiki master. Many hygienists have written to me regarding their interest in Reiki and how they practice this on their patients. I will digress for a moment and give some information on this technique.

Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. It is administered by “laying on hands” and is based on the idea that an unseen “life force energy” flows through us and is what causes us to be alive. If one’s “life force energy” is low, then we are more likely to get sick or feel stress. If it is high, we are more capable of being happy and healthy.

The word Reiki is made of two Japanese words — Rei which means “God’s wisdom or the higher power” and Ki which is “life force energy.” So Reiki is actually “spiritually guided life force energy.”

A treatment feels like a wonderful glowing radiance that flows through and around you. Reiki treats the whole person including body, emotions, mind, and spirit, creating many beneficial effects such as relaxation and feelings of peace, security, and well-being. Many



have reported miraculous results.

Reiki is a simple, natural, and safe method of spiritual healing and self-improvement that everyone can use. It has been effective in helping virtually every known illness and malady and always creates a beneficial effect. It also works in conjunction with all other medical or therapeutic techniques to relieve side effects and promote recovery.

An amazingly simple technique to learn, Reiki is not taught in the usual sense, but is transferred to the student during a Reiki class. This ability is passed on during an “attunement” given by a Reiki master and allows the student to tap into an unlimited supply of “life force energy” to improve one’s health and enhance quality of life.

Its use is not dependent on one’s intellectual capacity or spiritual development and, therefore, is available to everyone. It has been successfully taught to thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds. Visit [www.reiki.org](http://www.reiki.org) for more information.

Marianne, who is an amazing woman as well as an excellent dental hygienist, told me that she has many patients on whom she performs Reiki in the dental chair, mostly on their feet. Her patients’ response to this has been overwhelming; they want only her for their maintenance appointments. Marianne, or “Fuji” as her friends call her, had a teen patient whose oral hygiene was atrocious. She found out

that her patient loved Johnny Cash, so she made him a deal that if he kept his teeth clean and healthy for one year, she would get him the Johnny Cash double CD. This is what I mean by going above and beyond the typical maintenance visit. I am in awe of this wonder woman!

Another star in dental hygiene is Becky Grill, for more reasons than I could ever put into print. When I spoke at her component in Illinois, I asked about comfort products that hygienists use to help their patients. Becky mentioned nail polish. Nail polish? Becky keeps a bottle of pink nail polish in her drawer at work. If she has time, she asks many of the older ladies if they would like their nails polished. The highlight of their day is coming to the dental office to see Becky for their maintenance visit and anything else she may have to brighten their day. I find that many of my elderly patients “dress up” to come to the dental office. This is the bright spot in their day. I hope that all of us will remember this and not rush to get them in and out of the office. When these patients see our smiling faces welcoming them into our rooms, it gives them comfort and assurance that they will be genuinely cared for — and the key word here is genuine.

At the state meeting in Arizona, which by the way is one of the most electric in the country, I asked what they do to give comfort to their patients. A quiet hygienist mentioned that she

## Comfort Products and Techniques Used By Hygienists

- Sodium fluoride — Prevident 5000 by Colgate, Gel Kam, Nutra Care
- Desensitizing toothpaste — Sensodyne
- Proclude and Denclude
- Fluoride varnish — Duraphat by Colgate, Vanish by Omnia, NuCare, Gluma
- MI Paste by GC America
- Amorphous calcium phosphate prophylactic paste — Novamin by Premier
- Topical anesthetic — Cetacaine, Hurracaine
- Subgingivally applied local anesthetic — Oraqix by Orapharma
- Dyclone rinse
- Durashield
- Hurriseal
- Local anesthetic
- Nitrous oxide
- Edge-Eez for films
- Bite block with suction (A hygienist in Arizona is requesting a chocolate bite block. I'm all for it!)
- Fine prophylactic paste
- Novacaine patch
- Valium
- Zarosen
- Protect
- Rinsinol
- Flavored floss, flavored gloves
- Call patient by name, calm relaxing voice
- Words of assurance
- Smiles
- Sense of humor
- Hand on shoulder
- Allowing patient to hold saliva ejector
- Fish tank
- Sharpened instruments
- Sunglasses
- Lip ointment — Abreva, Chapstick, Soothe N Seal by Colgate
- Headphones / CD player / MP3 player
- Soothing music
- Low lights
- Water fountain
- Warm water
- Warm irrigation — Viajet Professional Irrigator by Oratec
- Good tastes and scents
- Blanket, supporting pillows, teddy bears
- Eye mask
- Heating pad
- Massage pad
- Hot packs
- Towel warmer with moist towels
- Nail polish

makes her operatory her own. Her office has mostly elderly patients, so she will remove facial hairs and apply an adhesive strip to their noses to remove blackheads. She then sends her patients home with a toothbrush and a rubber glove to be able to grab their own facial hairs more easily. I appreciate the creativity of dental hygienists. We want to take care of everyone in every way.

Many of us receive hugs after our patients' hygiene appointments. As much as our patients feel the need to hug us, we, in turn, benefit from their gratitude and even their sense of touch. We work hard in our profession. Some of us return to empty homes or families that — although we know we are loved — are not always demonstrative.

I ask dental hygienists what they do to make their patients more comfortable so I can learn what products and techniques they use for apprehension, fear, hypersensitivity, or anything that will alleviate fear or pain during the recare visit. See the box at left for a list of comfort products used by hygienists around the country.

**Aromatherapy tip:** I know that most of you are proactive pre-planners who are already thinking of writing out your holiday cards now. (Just joking.) Here's an idea you might want to consider before you send out your cards: scented greeting cards. They add a wonderful touch to the holidays ... **RDH**

### Scented Greeting Cards

**Directions:** Allow an extra day before writing out your greeting cards. Put a few drops of the Sugar and Spice Blend (below) onto a cotton ball. Put up to 15 cards and the cotton ball in a large Ziploc® bag, close it, and let it sit for at least 24 hours. Take care not to let the oil come in direct contact with cards or envelopes, because the fresh oil could stain them. For boxes of cards, you may have enough room to put the cotton ball right into the box.

### Sugar and Spice Blend

The aroma of cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and orange blend to make a sweet, spicy aroma perfect for Thanksgiving, Christmas, or any winter holiday. You may also use this in a diffuser.

#### Ingredients:

- 10 drops orange
- 5 drops ginger
- 8 drops cinnamon
- 1 drop nutmeg

*Debra Grant, RDH, CA, manages her own company,*

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