

Dispensing - Why Not? *By Roger P. Levin, DDS*

Surely, none of us bats an eye when ophthalmologists offer eyeglasses for sale in their offices. Do we give a second thought to dermatologists selling skin care products in their offices? No, not really. So here's the big question for dentists—what's the issue with dental practices offering oral care products for their patients?

Remarkably, some dentists are reluctant to dispense products that enhance patient care. I believe it is time to retire such reservations. Incorporating new state-of-the-art services that optimize patient care is part of the dental landscape—don't get left behind.

The truth is that patients don't mind at all when their dentist offers products for oral health care. In fact, they appreciate it. In-office dispensing has been very effective for practices that understand the role products play in their offices. It is an opportunity to make specific healthy recommendations to patients and have the product available for immediate purchase. This not only acts as a convenience factor for patients, it also pushes them one step closer to being compliant with your recommendations, increases practice production and contributes to higher hygiene department production.

Why Practices Cannot Afford To Not Dispense Products

Having items, such as the Waterpik® Water Flosser, available for sale in the practice is a positive and excellent strategy for several important reasons:

- **Patients need all the help they can get.** According to research studies, people brush with a manual toothbrush an average of 42 seconds... 42 seconds... that's not enough to get the job done as any hygienist can tell you.
- **Patients do not floss.** They may tell the hygienist that they floss but their gingival appearance suggests a very different story. You can tell patients how important it is to floss and most will *still* resist flossing daily. Patients often find the Waterpik® Water Flosser much easier and more convenient to use than regular floss.
- **Customer service is improved.** Patients are often pleased to discover that they can purchase an oral healthcare product, such as the Waterpik® Water Flosser, in the office. They appreciate that the practice has made the purchase easy.
- **It's convenient for patients.** Many of the products available in drug stores or markets can be purchased at much lower costs in the office due to a professional rate offered by the manufacturer to the practice.
- **It helps create "oral health conscious" patients.** What sort of patients become cosmetic patients? Those who appreciate their oral health. A product that promotes oral health is frequently a "tipping point" for patients to appreciate and enjoy the appearance of their smiles.

At the end of the day, offering home-care products can be an effective way to take the relationship with patients to a whole new level. Mentioning the latest developments on

home-care products, such as the Waterpik® Water Flosser, shows patients that practices care about them and wish to see them enjoy the best possible oral health. That's a win for patients. It's also a win for practices when patients become more interested in their own dental care.

Levin Group has shown thousands of general dentists how to achieve total practice success. In today's economy, more and more dentists are turning to Levin Group experts to transform their practices. To learn more about Levin Group seminars and consulting programs, visit www.levingroupgp.com.