



Lending a Hand in the Operator, without Lending a Hand

WITH KAY HICKEY, LDA, ZIRC PRODUCT SPECIALIST

Dental assistants are crucial to maintaining a productive and successful practice, as well as enhancing the patient experience. But the demand for dental assistants is now outpacing current numbers, causing many practices to experience staffing shortages that force patients to wait longer for appointments and decrease practice productivity. Here, licensed dental assistant and Zirc product specialist Kay Hickey shares how Zirc's Mr. Thirsty One-Step can help practices dealing with fewer dental assistants get through their busy days more efficiently.



Kay Hickey, LDA
zirc.com

Q: What is Mr. Thirsty One-Step and why is it so versatile?

A: Mr. Thirsty One-Step is a hands-free isolation and evacuation device that's extremely easy to use—simply hook it up to your existing HVE valve. It has a built-in bite block that will comfortably hold the patient's mouth open, retract the tongue, and protect the cheek, all while providing continuous suction. If that sounds a lot like what your assistant would be doing while you are prepping a tooth, that's because it is!

Q: How can Mr. Thirsty One-Step help short-staffed operatories stay productive?

A: Oftentimes when I am demonstrating Mr. Thirsty to dental assistants, their initial reaction is, "So, what am I supposed to do if the dentist uses Mr. Thirsty?" or, "I am being replaced by this gadget?" Let's think about that for a minute. What is the job description of a dental assistant in your practice? I can assure you that it is more than sucking spit and wrestling tongues! There is patient education, postoperative instructions, impressions, fabricating bleach trays and mouth guards, room turnover, sterilization, inventory management, equipment maintenance, radiographs, charting... and the list goes on and on.



For example, if you have a crown prep appointment scheduled but an emergency patient was squeezed in at the same time, the dentist can start the crown prep with Mr. Thirsty One-Step while the dental assistant seats the emergency patient, reviews their health history, takes preliminary notes, and gets a radiograph—keeping the patient happy and practice productive.

Q: Why should more practices start using isolation devices?

A: I can recall on many occasions where a patient would be scheduled to come in to get a retainer or bleach tray and I didn't have time to finish. It was stressful trying to figure out when I was going to get it done before the patient arrived, all while performing my other duties and assisting the dentist. How nice it would have been to have an isolation device like Mr. Thirsty so the dentist could work on a patient while I took the time I needed to fabricate the dental appliance.