

GARGI MUKHERJI, DDS

Dr. Mukherji is a graduate of Texas A&M University College of Dentistry. She worked in private practice for 10 years before pursuing her passion for teaching as an assistant professor at UTHealth School of Dentistry in Houston, TX.



RALPH A. COOLEY, DDS, FAGD

Dr. Cooley is a full-time associate professor at UTHealth School of Dentistry in Houston, TX, where his focus is on admissions and patient care.



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ZIRC

Airway Armor

Aspiration and ingestion prevention in a product that is easy to place, durable, and comfortable for the patient

During most procedures, the patient is in a supine or semi-recumbent position with the back of the throat and airway completely open and vulnerable to aspiration or ingestion of a foreign body. Foreign objects being accidentally swallowed or aspirated can result in serious adverse complications including morbidity and mortality. Some of these foreign objects may include endodontic files, tooth extractions, orthodontic brackets, crowns, burs, prophy heads, pins and posts, rubber dam clamps, and mouth mirrors.

So, how can clinicians best protect patients from aspirating or swallowing objects?

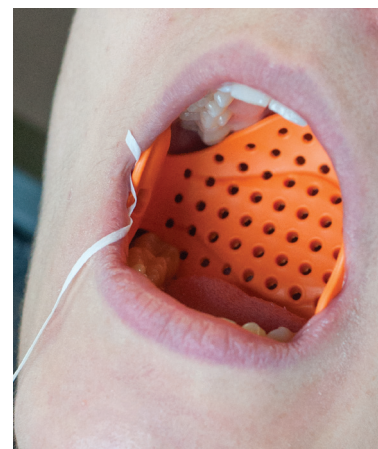
Zirc has developed a new safety device to protect patients. Airway Armor serves as a barrier to swallowing or aspirating objects, allowing dentists to practice safely and confidently, knowing there is a "safety net"

for their patients.

"Airway Armor is really designed to protect the airway of the patient while the clinician is doing certain procedures and while the patient is in the dental chair," said Dr. Ralph Cooley, one of the product's inventors.

Available in 3 sizes, Airway Armor is convenient for both adults and children. This latex-free safety device is disposable and serves as a stable, comfortable, protective barrier in the mouth. It is easily placed and retrieved, and is invaluable in all of those situations where other protective barriers are not viable options.

"When Airway Armor is in the patient's mouth, the patient can still close. It's also very simple to use and is very easy to place—even a rubber dam actually takes some time to put in. But this is really quick, putting it in and taking it out," said Dr. Gargi Mukherji, who co-invented the product.



Airway Armor gives practitioners as well as patients peace of mind during treatment including extractions, implants, restorations, orthodontics, and pediatric procedures.

"I just feel like we [all] could be better dentists if we are protecting patients' airways to the best of our ability," said Dr. Mukherji. "This is something that can really improve our profession, and improve the care we render to our patients."

TAKEAWAYS

Airway Armor offers multiple benefits in comparison to using a dental dam, including easy placement, durability, patient comfort, and full-mouth accessibility.

