

KEEPING THINGS CLEAR

BY **ANNE NUGENT GUIGNON**, RDH, MPH

When I first started writing this column, Mark Hartley, the editor, scratched his head when I said I wanted to write about mirrors and suction systems. I'm sure these topics seemed trivial.

Even though a mouth mirror is a critical tool for nearly every intraoral procedure, sadly, many clinicians ignore the quality of this multipurpose instrument. It is impossible to make an accurate, sound clinical decision if the mirror is heavily scratched, dirty or fogged up. To make matters worse, not all mirror surfaces are created equal. Front surface rhodium mirrors are the most common, but provide an inferior visual image when compared to other surfaces.

A number of years ago, Zirc (zirc.com) introduced the Crystal Mirror, which is made from 43 layers of metal oxide. The Crystal Mirror technology produces a clearer, crisper reflected image than other products on the market, reducing clinician eyestrain and providing a more accurate color reflection. The advantage of this mirror surface is readily apparent when one compares a standard rhodium mirror to this metal oxide technology.

Crystal Mirrors are now available in a number of different sizes ranging from number 3 to number 5. They also come in both single-sided and double-sided. They are available with all-metal backs, as well as in a variety of colorful plastic resins that eliminate galvanic shock caused by metal housings. Crystal mirrors are available as a screw-on head for existing mirror handles. The one-piece design comes with or without a soft medical-grade, silicone-padded grip on the handle. Just for fun, Zirc also has giant mirrors that are great patient education tools or gifts for those dental professionals who have everything.

Despite the advances in mirror technology, one of the biggest challenges facing every clinical dental hygienist is how to efficiently and effectively keep the mirror surface clean and fog free. Even though the mirror is an important retraction tool, it is indispensable for indirect vision and adding more illumination in the oral cavity. However, its value diminishes rapidly when the surface looks like a dirty windshield covered with mid-January ice and snow debris.

For years, Zirc has been working on a mid-procedure anti-fogging cleaning system that would be efficient and easy to use in the clinical setting. At RDH Under One Roof, the company highlighted their new Mirror Magic system, designed to keep mirrors fog free. The two-part system consists of a small absorbent pad and the special Mirror Magic liquid.

Stick the pad onto the back of the gloved hand that you use for scaling or onto the patient bib, creating a smooth workflow in a very ergonomically friendly space. Apply several drops of liquid to the pad. Wipe the mirror surface across the moistened pad as needed to remove debris and to activate and maintain the fog-free action. Repeat as needed.

Two products, created by dental hygienists, add to the discussion of keeping things clear: Mirror Gear (mirrorgearusa.com) and the Blue Boa (theblueboa.com). Mirror Gear is a unique autoclavable, medical-grade silicone cover that slips easily over any mirror, protecting precious surfaces from unnecessary scratches. The cover's fit allows the fluid in the ultrasonic bath to reach the mirror surface during the cleaning process and does not inhibit the sterilization process in autoclaving.

While the Blue Boa has nothing to do with mirrors or reflection, it is a unique suction extension tubing that when properly used, will improve fluid evacuation during ultrasonic scaling and other dental procedures. The Blue Boa tubing is also a medical-grade, autoclavable device. One end fits into the high volume suction hose and the other end, depending on the style, accepts either a standard or small-bore saliva ejector, like the hygofomic design or the Otis Formaject. Properly configured, the saliva ejector will rest comfortably in the patient's mouth without constantly needing to be repositioned. The Blue Boa website contains a step-by-step video on how to create the perfect saliva ejector bend that will keep this all-important device well mannered and behaving! It's the little things that help keep the oral cavity clear and visible. These incredibly valuable options reduce unnecessary stress and increase our comfort zone. **RDH**



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ANNE NUGENT GUIGNON, RDH, MPH, provides popular programs, including topics on biofilms, power driven scaling, ergonomics, hypersensitivity, and remineralization. Recipient of the 2004 Mentor of the Year Award and the 2009 ADHA Irene Newman Award, Anne has practiced clinical dental hygiene in Houston since 1971.