



Healthy Smile
Healthy Heart

Why Set Up Your Dental Practice Into a Wellness Center?

We routinely evaluate practice statistics from recall appointments, which show that while more than 50% of the monthly recall patients have periodontal disease, only about 10% of them receive treatment for it. Patients feel that “bleeding gums are normal” and don’t consider it a problem. These patients would be highly motivated to accept periodontal care if they fully understood the risk to their health. Fully implementing periodontal treatment in the practice not only would treat these patients who need care, but it could also more than double hygiene productivity and profitability by adding an additional \$20,000 per month.

Additionally, by establishing an oral-systemic testing protocol in your practice as part of your wellness assessment, you could be discovering diabetics, pre-diabetics, and people with impending heart attack risk weekly, putting your practice on the leading edge of preventative medicine in your area. Today, every dentist in town is the consummate “cosmetic dentist.” Why not be the leader in health in your area and build your own wellness center niche?

Finally, you will discover the benefits of positioning your practice as a leader in advanced treatments for periodontal disease. Since periodontal disease and systemic disease are intimately related, it is vital to co-manage your periodontal patients with the other members of their healthcare team. This will create two-way referral relationships with other members of the medical profession and bring higher quality patients to your practice-patients that value their health and have been referred to you by their physicians.

How Many Lives Could You Save?

Quantifiable Life-Savings

The question isn’t whether treating periodontal disease will save lives by reducing heart attacks and diabetes as well as other systemic diseases, but rather, how many lives will be saved? The average healthy patient has about a 1% chance of a heart attack per year (AHA 16) depending on a number of risk factors. Almost 30% of your adult patients will have some relationship with diabetes; 7% will have it and know it; 3% will have it and not know it, and 20% are prediabetic. (NDIC 17) Following is an example of the impact that a dental practice might have as a wellness center. If the practice has 2,000 active patients with an average age of 50 years, and 50% (1,000) have bleeding and/or pockets <4 mm, then clinicians can prevent 16 heart attacks a year.

If we combine the distribution of CRP of people with periodontal disease with the risk of CRP at different levels, we have the table below.

CRP Range Mg/L	0-1.0	1.0-5.0	5.0-9.0	9+
% of Population	50%	25%	15%	10%
Midpoint Risk Level	1	3	5	6
Contribution to risk	0.5	0.75	0.75	0.6
Total Risk Factor	2.6			

This shows that the average person with periodontal disease has approximately 2.6 times the risk of heart attack of the average person. If we have 1000 periodontal patients in the practice and reduce their risks to normal, we would prevent 1.6% X 1000+ 16 heart attacks.

It should be noted that the JUPITER study showed that reducing CRP by 37% in 8500 patients with normal cholesterol, reduced the heart attack rate by over 50%.

It is possible to save 40 people from becoming type 2 diabetics a year, adding 8.2 years to their lives. Of your 2,000 patients, 20% (400) have HbA1c scores between 6.0 and 6.9 meaning that if you didn't intervene and stop their periodontal disease, then they would likely become diabetics within the next 10 years. That totals 40 people per year for 10 years that you could save from diabetes.

If you discover 60 people who have diabetes now and don't know it, intervention could add years to their lives. Of your existing patients, 3% (60) have diabetes now and don't know it. Co-management now with their primary care medical doctor can greatly increase their survival rates.

It is possible to save the lives of 4 type 2 diabetics a year. Odds are 200 of your patients have type 2 diabetes, and 80% (160) of those have periodontal disease. Treating their periodontal disease will stop about 2.5% (4) of those from dying (mainly from ischemic heart disease and kidney disease) each year.

Non-Quantifiable Life-Savings

Discover cancer through CRP testing. Cancer is an inflammatory disease and tends to raise CRP off the charts. Our offices have found people with very high CRP scores and referred them to their medical doctor, who then found cancer that was previously undetected. Early discovery of cancer can often be the difference between successful treatment and a terminal disease.