

## Promoting At-Home Oral Care Products

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In addition to performing a range of diagnostic and prophylactic oral health procedures, dental hygienists also play a vital educational role. Observing the condition of patients' teeth and gums, they're able to judge how well patients are caring for their teeth at home and give sound recommendations about how to improve the quality of dental care at home. As highly trained dental professionals, hygienists are in a position to become trusted advisors, helping your practice's patients achieve optimal oral health.

A natural extension of this educational service is to ensure that the dental care products patients use in their daily routines are clinically proven to be the most effective and appropriate to meet individual needs.

### A Professional Approach to Product Promotion

Consumers today are confronted with a sometimes confusing array of home care products—including brushes (both manual and power), pastes, flosses and rinses. Without guidance beyond the usual "brush and floss" instructions, your patients could choose products that are less than ideal for them.

Reputable manufacturers conduct extensive, scientifically sound research into the performance of their products and make reports of their findings available to dental professionals. In other words, your hygienist can ascertain the effectiveness of various products, based not only on how they work for her patients but also on scientific research. Under these circumstances, "promoting" preferred products actually represents a valuable professional service.

Many dental practices have gone a step further. Their hygienists not only recommend products but also provide them, at cost or at a discounted price, as a courtesy to their patients. By doing this at your practice, your hygienist will be broadening the range of oral health care you provide and strengthening to practice-patient relationship.

### The Question of Time

In some cases, hygienists initially express concern about the time they'll spend discussing (and in some cases demonstrating) products during patient appointments. However, they eventually discover that patients who use recommended products present with less plaque. By investing a little time in product education, they actually *save* time during subsequent visits, thanks to patients' improved home care.

## Author



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