

DEFINITE.

MODERN DENTISTRY

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AUTISM X DENTAL HEALTH
CHANTAL RICHARDS, RDH

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Carl Demadema, BOHSc

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to welcome you to the second issue of Dente, where our journey into the world of dental discovery continues. Your invaluable input and feedback from our inaugural issue have been instrumental in shaping this edition, and we are excited to share with you the fruits of our collective efforts.

In this issue, we delve into topics that are informative and deeply relevant. We explore the intricate relationship between pregnancy and the oral cavity, providing insights into navigating this transformative period with your dental health intact. We also shift our focus to the youngest members of our families, offering guidance on how to care for your child's precious smile.

Additionally, we have a special feature on autism in dental care, shedding light on the unique challenges and considerations that dental professionals and families face when providing dental care to individuals on the autism spectrum. It's an area that deserves more attention, and we're proud to present this in-depth exploration.

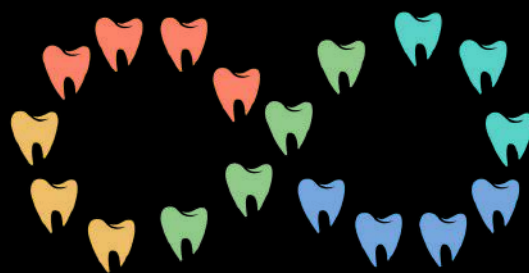
I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our readers, contributors, and experts who have shared their wisdom, experiences, and expertise. Your feedback has led to improvements in our content and approach, and we value your continued engagement.

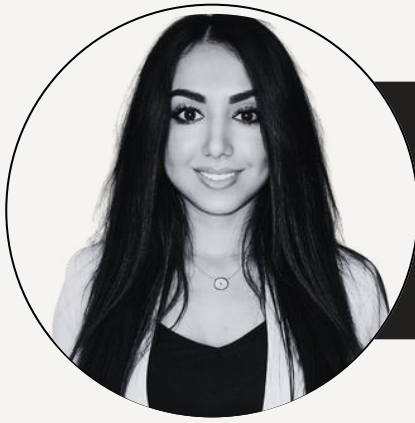
As we embark on this new journey in the pages of Dente, we are more committed than ever to bringing you insightful, thought-provoking, and enlightening articles that empower you to make informed decisions about your oral health. We look forward to your feedback, ideas, and suggestions, as they continue to be the driving force behind the evolution of Dente. Please reach out and share your thoughts with us.

Thank you for being a part of this remarkable journey. Together, we will keep pushing the boundaries of dental knowledge and discovery

Warm regards,

**Carl Demadema, BOHSc
Editor-in-Chief, Dente Magazine**





RAZHAN JAF, RDH

What are some key tips for preventing bad breath, and when is it a sign of a more serious dental issue?

Bad breath can be caused by various factors, such as dry mouth, poor oral hygiene or lack of it, food particles, smoking and even underlying medical conditions and medications.

One of the most effective ways to prevent bad breath is maintaining good oral hygiene. This includes brushing and flossing and most importantly brushing the tongue at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste to remove the food particles and plaque that harbor the bacteria that causes bad breath. As a dental hygienist, I enforce flossing on all my patients and educate them about the importance of daily flossing. This will remove the plaque and food between the teeth and gums, which is essential for keeping the bacteria load down that lead to halitosis. I also educate my patients on the importance of hydration or something as simple as just stimulating the salivary glands, especially if I know their medical history has some medications that cause dry mouth. The best ways to do both are drinking plenty of fluids and chewing sugar-free gum. This will freshen the breath and stimulate the saliva production, which can neutralize acids and rinse away odor-causing bacteria. I would also add alcohol-free mouthwash to your home care routine, as alcohol-based products dry out the mouth. Unfortunately, bad breath can be more serious and can be a sign of dental problems that need attention. One such problem is periodontitis, which is a severe form of gum disease that can damage the tissue and bones that support the teeth. Periodontitis can cause bad breath that does not go away with just brushing and using over-the-counter mouthwash. Periodontitis can be maintained with proper oral hygiene and regular dental visits to keep you on track of your oral health.

Finally, consult your dental hygienist or dentist about your symptoms and they can help you pave a way for a healthy smile and overall well-being.



Brace Yourself

A Guide to Choosing Foods That Keep Your Smile in Shape

When you have braces, it's essential to be mindful of the foods you eat to avoid damaging your braces and set you back in your journey to the perfect smile. Here's a list of foods that are generally safe to eat when you have braces.

Dairy:

Yogurt
Soft cheese
Pudding

Grains:

Soft cooked rice
Cooked pasta
Soft bread without crusts

Meats/Poultry:

Soft-cooked chicken
Meatloaf
Soft deli meats (in moderation)

Seafood:

Soft-cooked fish
Tuna (soft varieties)

Fruits:

Applesauce
Bananas
Soft berries (cut into small pieces)
Peeled and sliced soft fruits

Vegetables:

Mashed potatoes
Steamed or boiled vegetables (cut into small pieces)
Soft-cooked beans

Snacks:

Soft crackers
Jello
Soft cookies (without nuts or hard chunks)

Water:

Staying hydrated is crucial for oral health.

Milk:

Provides calcium for tooth and bone health.

Smoothies:

Blended fruits and yogurt or milk.

Ice Cream:

Soft ice cream or yogurt-based treats.

Popsicles:

Avoid biting; let them melt.

Special Considerations**Cut or Break Foods:**

For harder foods, like apples or carrots, cut or break them into small, bite-sized pieces.

Avoid Sticky and Hard Foods:

Gum
Hard candies
Popcorn
Nuts
Pretzels
Chewing on ice
Be Mindful of Sugary Foods:

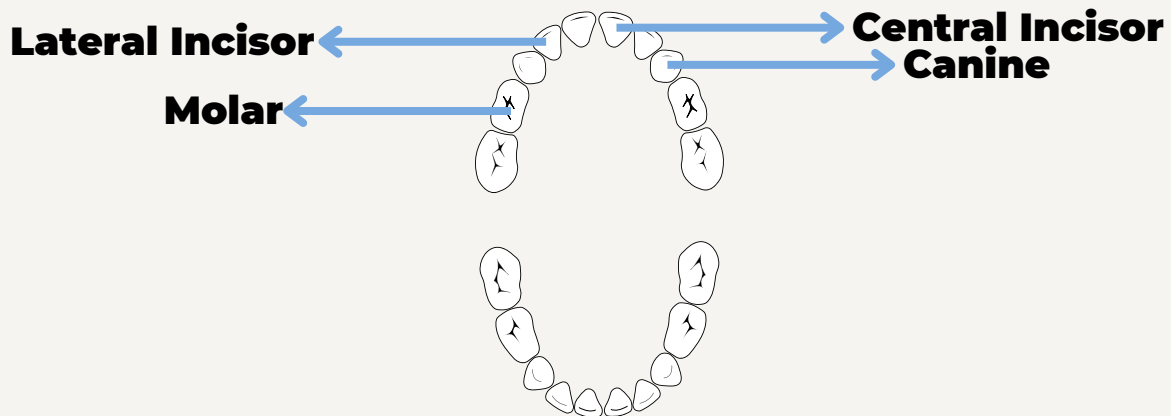
Proper oral hygiene is crucial when consuming sugary foods to prevent cavities.

Carefully Navigate Crunchy Foods:

Be cautious with crunchy snacks; break them into smaller, manageable pieces.

Growing Smiles

Nurturing Your Child's Oral Health from Babyhood to Toddlerhood



Eruption Dates:

Tooth eruption, in simple terms, refers to the process of a tooth coming through the gums and becoming visible in the mouth. It's the natural way new teeth grow in, typically starting with baby teeth during infancy and followed by permanent teeth as a child grows older.

Primary Teeth:

Central Incisors (front teeth):

Upper: 8-12 months
Lower: 6-10 months

Lateral Incisors (next to central incisors):

Upper: 9-13 months
Lower: 10-16 months

Canine (Cuspid) Teeth (pointed teeth next to lateral incisors):

Upper: 16-22 months
Lower: 17-23 months

First Molars (back teeth):

Upper: 13-19 months
Lower: 14-18 months

Second Molars:

Upper: 25-33 months
Lower: 23-31 months

Now that you know when your little one's teeth coming we can go through tips on how to care for their teeth as they grow:



Infant (0-6 months):

Cleaning Gums:

Wipe your baby's gums with a clean, damp cloth after feeding, especially before bedtime.



Baby (6-12 months):

First Tooth Eruption:

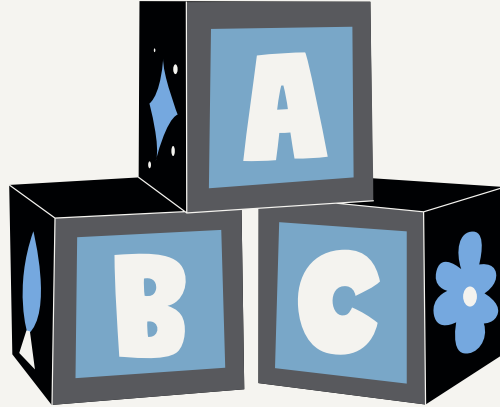
Once the first tooth appears, start using a small, soft-bristled toothbrush designed for infants.

Toothpaste Introduction:

Begin using a tiny smear of fluoride toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice) when brushing your baby's teeth.



Toddler (1-2 years):



Regular Brushing Routine:

Brush your toddler's teeth twice a day, using a small amount (pea-sized) of fluoride toothpaste.

Introduce Drinking Cup:

Transition from a bottle to a sippy cup around their first birthday to reduce the risk of tooth decay. Also, remember not to put sugary drinks in the sippy cup in tandem with this switch. Stick to water and milk (At mealtimes)

First Dental Visit:

Schedule the first dental check-up by the age of one or as recommended by your dentist.



Preschooler (2-3 years):

Supervised Brushing:

Continue brushing your child's teeth twice a day, and supervise the brushing to ensure proper technique.

Regular Dental Check-ups:

Schedule regular dental check-ups every six months or as recommended by your dentist.

Healthy Eating Habits:

Encourage a balanced diet with limited sugary snacks and drinks to prevent tooth decay.

Teaching Independence:

Allow your child to start practicing brushing with your supervision, gradually teaching them independence.

Oral Health Education:

Begin teaching your child about the importance of oral hygiene and the role of brushing and flossing in keeping their teeth healthy.



Unveiling the Oral-Health-Pregnancy Nexus

Pregnancy is a transformative journey marked by joyous expectations and numerous physical changes. Amidst the excitement, the intricate link between pregnancy and oral health deserves careful consideration. This article explores various facets of this connection, drawing insights from recent research studies and shedding light on the manifestations, potential complications, and postpartum implications. Additionally, practical tips for enhancing oral health during pregnancy will be discussed, culminating in a comprehensive understanding of the critical interplay between maternal well-being and oral health.

Oral Manifestations and Effects on Pregnancy Outcomes

During pregnancy, your body undergoes significant changes that can impact your oral health. Pregnant women commonly experience a high prevalence of gingivitis and periodontal diseases, often exacerbated by hormonal shifts and changes in dietary habits. The manifestation of these oral health issues is associated with adverse outcomes such as preterm birth and low birth weight (Jahan et al., 2022).

Other manifestations include pre-eclampsia, characterized by high blood pressure typically manifesting around 20 weeks into pregnancy. It is crucial information for considering invasive dental treatments. Additional manifestations encompass gingival tissue ulcerations, pregnancy granuloma (a benign round growth that can form on your gums), gingivitis (gum disease), pregnancy tumors (another type of benign growth), loose teeth, mouth dryness, and dental erosions (the gradual loss of your outer tooth layer, enamel, due to acid coming from vomiting, often associated with morning sickness).

A correlation between oral health and adverse pregnancy outcomes has been established. The severity of periodontal diseases is linked to negative pregnancy outcomes. Proposed mechanisms include the direct invasion of oral microorganisms into the fetal-placenta unit and the impact of oral inflammatory mediators on fetal-placental health (Xu and Han, 2022).



Importance of Oral Education

A study conducted by Ben David et al. focused on postpartum women and their oral health knowledge. The findings not only revealed a deficiency in education provided to pregnant women but also highlighted a lack of adherence to the knowledge available.

Key Findings of the Study:

Oral Health Knowledge:

**98.0% understood the importance of oral hygiene in children.
Overall oral health knowledge was rated as medium to low.
Only 4.6% received oral health advice from obstetricians during pregnancy.**

Gingival Health:

**Most participants had a high gingival index score.
Correlation found between the gingival index score and dental pain during pregnancy.
Suggests a potential link between pregnancy-related dental issues and gingival health.**

Dental Practices:

**About one-third visited the dentist every 6 or 12 months before pregnancy.
Most continued usual dental behavior during pregnancy.
Significant number experienced tooth or gum pain during pregnancy.**

Dental Examination Results:

**First-time mothers had a statistically lower decayed, missing, and filled teeth (DMFT) compared to multiparous women.
Dental pain during pregnancy positively correlated with a higher gingival index score.**

Knowledge Gaps:

Gaps identified in areas like timing of the first dental examination for children, effects of sweet foods on children's teeth, and awareness of fluoride in toothpaste and sealants for children.

Knowledge Correlations:

**Older age positively correlated with oral health knowledge.
No significant correlation found between education and oral health knowledge.**

Healthcare Professional Awareness:

**Only 4.6% received oral health advice from obstetricians during pregnancy.
Indicates a potential gap in healthcare professional awareness regarding oral health during pregnancy.**

(Ben David et al., 2022)



Pregnant women can take several steps to improve their oral health and reduce the risk of dental issues during pregnancy. Here are some recommendations:

Regular Dental Checkups:

Schedule regular dental checkups before and during pregnancy. Inform the dentist about the pregnancy so that they can tailor the treatment plan accordingly.

Maintain Good Oral Hygiene:

Brush teeth at least twice a day using fluoride toothpaste. Floss daily to remove plaque and food particles between teeth. Use an antimicrobial or fluoride mouthwash if recommended by the dentist.

Balanced Diet:

Consume a balanced diet rich in essential nutrients, including calcium, phosphorus, and vitamins. Limit sugary snacks and beverages to reduce the risk of cavities.

Stay Hydrated:

Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Water helps in maintaining saliva production, which is essential for oral health.

Address Morning Sickness:

If experiencing morning sickness, rinse the mouth with water or a fluoride mouthwash after vomiting to neutralize acid and protect teeth. Do not brush straight after vomiting.

Dental Treatment Planning:

If dental treatment is needed, discuss the options and timing with both the dentist and obstetrician to ensure safe and effective care.

X-Rays and Medications:

Inform dental professionals about the pregnancy before any X-rays or medications are prescribed. Many routine dental treatments are safe during pregnancy, especially after the first trimester.

Manage Pregnancy Gingivitis:

Practice good oral hygiene to manage pregnancy gingivitis, a condition characterized by swollen and bleeding gums. Regular dental checkups can help monitor and address this issue.

Educate Yourself:

Seek information on oral health during pregnancy. Understanding the importance of oral hygiene and how it can impact the health of both the mother and baby is crucial.

Oral Health Education:

If oral health information is not provided during routine prenatal care, ask healthcare providers about the importance of oral health and seek advice on maintaining a healthy mouth during pregnancy.

Remember that maintaining oral health during pregnancy is not only important for the mother but can also contribute to the overall health of the developing fetus. Consulting with healthcare providers and dental professionals is key to ensuring a healthy oral environment during pregnancy.





JENNIFER WILLENBRING
ASDH, BSCH

What exactly happens when you go for a professional whitening and what is the difference between a professional whitening kit and an at home whitening kit?

There are so many whitening options out there which lead to an array of misunderstanding and questions regarding what is the best option for each individual. Whitening results are dependent on several factors including genetics, and lifestyle considerations such as types of food eaten, drink habits, tobacco use, previous dental work, etc. It is also important to be aware of the active ingredients in professional whitening products. To make teeth whiter, the products used will either have a form of hydrogen peroxide or carbamide peroxide in them. The consumer should know that typically, whitening toothpaste is not going to give someone the overall desired effect and in fact, can be abrasive to the tooth structure and create some tooth sensitivity. With all of this in mind, professional whitening is the ideal option for whiter teeth and the dentist customizes this process individually for each person.

Professional whitening entails either in-office whitening and/or at-home whitening. The first, and typically more expensive option, is going into a dental setting (all of these procedures should be performed by a dental professional) for in-office whitening. This is a great option for someone who has an occasion coming up such as a wedding, photo shoot, or a dental cosmetic procedure, and doesn't have the time for at-home whitening. The steps involved include photos being taken at the beginning of the process to compare before and after, then a gel barrier is placed on the gum tissue to protect the tissue from irritation of the whitening agent followed by the whitening agent being placed on the teeth that are being whitened. Next, a special light is used to accelerate the whitening agent and lastly, photos are taken to show how many shades lighter the teeth have become. The process itself is quite easy and depending on which system the dental office uses, it can take anywhere from 1 to 3 hours, and you leave with whiter teeth (some offices will also send home either custom fit trays or white strips to keep up on the whitening at home).




JENNIFER WILLENBRING
ASDH, BSCH

What exactly happens when you go for a professional whitening and what is the difference between a professional whitening kit and an at home whitening kit?

The other option to consider is at-home whitening. This can range from custom-fit trays that are made at a dental office to using white strips that go over the teeth. The custom-fit trays are exactly that. You go to a dental office where dental impressions and records are taken and from there, custom-fit trays are made to be taken home and a whitening gel is placed in the trays which then get inserted in the mouth. Depending on the gel that is used, the time that the trays are left in the mouth can range from 10 minutes to overnight initially for one to two weeks (see manufacturer's directions). White strips are another at-home option. There is professional strength (which is typically bought at a dental office) and over-the-counter strength which is purchased at the store. The main difference is the stronger the strength the faster the whitening result. The white strips are malleable strips (one for the top teeth and one for the bottom teeth) that fold over the front of the teeth wrap a bit onto the back edge of the teeth and are left in place anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes up to two times a day. It is important not to exceed the number of days recommended by the manufacturer (see manufacturer recommendations). With both the tray and the white strips, brush the product off right away after the tray or strip is removed. With any of the products, typically touch-ups are done when needed. With all whitening, there is the risk of tooth sensitivity after the procedure is performed, however, this typically subsides a few days after whitening is completed. The recommendation is to always consult a dentist whenever using any whitening product.

The world of whitening can be very overwhelming, just have a look in the toothpaste aisle to feel product overload. It is my hope that this article can help clear up and answer questions regarding professional and at-home whitening and the differences between the two procedures.

A black and white portrait of Chantal Richards, a woman with curly hair, wearing a white lab coat over a dark top. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is plain white.

Spectrum-Focused **Dental Care** Carl Demadema, **BOHSc**

In the world of healthcare, every individual deserves access to quality care, regardless of their unique challenges. For those on the autism spectrum, a routine dental visit can be a daunting experience. Enter Chantal Richards, a Registered Dental Hygienist and a Certified Autism Specialist, who is on a mission to bridge the gap between dental care and autism. In this exclusive interview, Chantal shares her qualifications, experiences, and strategies for providing autism-friendly dental care.

1. A Journey of Dedication and Expertise:

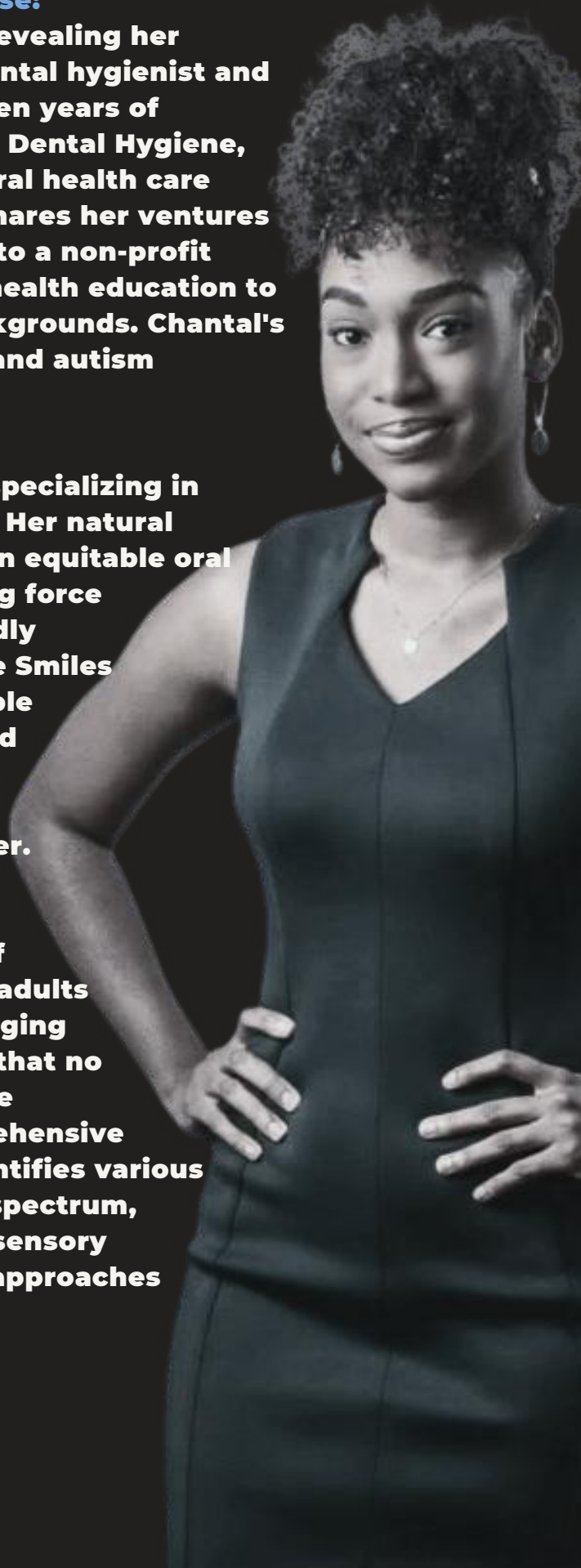
Chantal Richards introduces herself, revealing her background and qualifications as a dental hygienist and a certified autism specialist. With seven years of experience and a Bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene, Chantal's commitment to improving oral health care extends beyond her profession. She shares her ventures into radio hosting and her dedication to a non-profit organization aimed at providing oral health education to children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Chantal's journey into the world of dental care and autism advocacy is truly inspiring.

2. Passion Meets Purpose:

Chantal discusses her inspiration for specializing in working with individuals with autism. Her natural passion for helping others and belief in equitable oral care for everyone served as the driving force behind her dedication to autism-friendly dentistry. Chantal's dental office, Pure Smiles Jamaica, sought to create a comfortable environment for both ASD patients and their caregivers, leading to additional training and specialization in treating patients with autism spectrum disorder.

3. Tailoring Care to Unique Needs:

Chantal emphasizes the importance of adapting dental care for children and adults with autism, considering the wide-ranging nature of the condition. Recognizing that no two individuals with ASD are alike, she underscores the necessity of a comprehensive screening process. This screening identifies various factors, such as their position on the spectrum, verbal or non-verbal communication, sensory triggers, and more, enabling tailored approaches for each patient.





4. Building Trust Through Effective Communication

Effective communication is crucial when working with autistic patients. Chantal shares strategies for establishing trust with ASD patients during dental appointments, including gathering information on their preferences and creating a comfortable environment. She highlights the significance of gradual exposure to the dental practice and building a sense of familiarity to reduce anxiety.

5. Navigating Sensory Sensitivities

Chantal addresses the common sensory sensitivities among people with autism and provides insights into accommodating these sensitivities in dental practice. She emphasizes the importance of patience, trial and error, and close attention to the patient's reactions during the procedure to ensure their comfort and success.

6. Real-Life Challenges and Successes

Chantal shares a challenging case involving an autistic patient who refused to enter the treatment room. She describes how creativity and flexibility were essential in addressing the patient's needs, highlighting the importance of meeting the patient where they are and gradually building trust.

7. Collaborative Care

Collaboration with healthcare professionals and caregivers is essential when working with individuals with autism. Chantal elaborates on her coordination efforts and information sharing to provide comprehensive support for her patients, ensuring they receive the best care.

8. Adapting Sensory Aspects of Dental Care

Chantal discusses how she adapts the sensory aspects of dental hygiene to meet the preferences and sensitivities of her autistic patients. She emphasizes the importance of trial and error, documentation of patient preferences, and the use of the TELL-SHOW-DO method to create a comfortable experience.

9. Culturally Sensitive and Inclusive Care

Chantal explains how a dental professional can ensure that their practice is culturally sensitive and inclusive while providing specialized care for autistic individuals. She emphasizes the need for staff training and communication to prepare for patients with special needs effectively.

10. Parental Involvement in Dental Health

Chantal highlights the importance of educating and involving parents or guardians in maintaining their child's dental health. She customizes oral hygiene instructions based on the challenges faced by parents and caregivers, providing specific recommendations and sending information after appointments.

11. Innovative Techniques and Technologies

While Chantal acknowledges that she works in a developing country with limited access to cutting-edge technology, she mentions innovative techniques and technologies that enhance the dental care experience for autistic individuals. These include virtual reality, aromatherapy, sedation dentistry, augmented reality, and behavior management software.

12. Staying Informed and Continuously Learning

Continuous learning is vital in healthcare, and Chantal discusses her methods for staying informed about the latest developments in dental hygiene and autism-related care. She emphasizes the value of attending conferences, participating in webinars, and conducting credible and current research.

13. Challenges and Rewards

Chantal reflects on the most significant challenges and rewards associated with her dual roles as a dental hygienist and a certified autism specialist. She shares the emotional challenges of referring uncooperative patients but also the immense satisfaction of successfully treating and building trust with patients on the autism spectrum.

14. Aspiring for Change

In conclusion, Chantal offers advice to aspiring dental hygienists interested in specializing in autism care within the dental field. Her message is clear: if you have a passion for helping others, a dedication to creating change, and a commitment to providing mental and physical support, this field is a phenomenal avenue to explore.

Chantal Richards exemplifies the transformative power of dedication and compassion in the world of autism-friendly dental care. Her insights and experiences serve as a guiding light for dental professionals and advocates striving to make a difference in the lives of those with autism spectrum disorder.



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