

Interview: How to improve your prophylactic technique

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In an upcoming webinar, Faye Donald will highlight the benefits of good technique regarding dental prophylaxis. (Image: Nikodash/Shutterstock)



By **Brendan Day**, Dental Tribune International
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As an award-winning dental hygienist and experienced Guided Biofilm Therapy (GBT) clinician, Faye Donald's passion lies in educating, motivating and empowering dental professionals to provide preventive care. At the upcoming GBT Summit—Virtual Edition, she will be presenting a live webinar on the importance of technique in delivering oral prophylaxis. Donald spoke with Dental Tribune International about this topic and about what she wants her webinar's attendees to learn.

Ms Donald, has prophylactic technique always been a focus of yours? If not, was there something that led to you realising its importance?

I don't think the importance of technique has ever been widely talked about in dentistry. At dental school, we were taught the basics of how to use a piece of equipment but we didn't work on perfecting a technique—certainly not in any detail. I don't think I truly understood how much technique mattered until I switched to GBT. There was so much talk around GBT being more efficient, gentler and less invasive that I started to ask myself how this could be. Aren't all techniques the same?

It was only when I really got to know and understand how the technology works at its best that I realised how much technique influences outcome.

What are the benefits of good technique regarding dental prophylaxis?

The benefits largely fall into three categories: benefits for the tooth, benefits for the patient and benefits for the clinician.

By definition, the word prophylaxis refers to the prevention of disease. What we're doing when we carry out a prophylactic treatment is preventing disease—we're either preventing its onset or its progression. For the patient's teeth, preservation of as much tissue as possible is crucial when we consider the reattachment of periodontal fibres, which will take place at a much better rate when cementum is preserved rather than removed. This results in less recession, which means less root exposure. Less root exposure means reduced risk of caries, less sensitivity and a lower risk of impaired aesthetic appearance.

Good technique will also have an impact on the patient experience. Poor technique will result in increased discomfort for the patient. Instead of the treatment being relatively pain-free, the patient may find it lasts longer, is more painful and that he or she experiences more postoperative sensitivity.

For the clinician, working with a poor technique can have an impact on patient relationships and result in poor recall attendance—if you hurt the patient, he or she is less likely to want to come back. It can also compromise results as you might not remove all of the deposit and can likewise lead to poor time efficiency. In addition, there can be an increased risk of musculoskeletal problems for the clinician resulting from poor ergonomics and posture.

What would you like participants to take away from your webinar?

I would like participants not only to understand how to improve their technique but also to grasp why it is important to do so. If we understand the why first, then we are better placed to learn the how, and, in this way, we can improve our daily practice and our patients' long-term outcomes.

Editor's note: As part of the GBT Summit—Virtual Edition, which will be hosted by EMS and the Swiss Dental Academy and broadcast live starting on 8 January 2022 at 9:00 a.m. CET, Donald will be hosting a webinar titled "Improving my prophylaxis technique". The webinar will begin at 12:00 p.m. CET and participants will be able to earn a continuing education credit by answering a questionnaire after the lecture. Dental professionals who would like to attend the presentation may register on the [Swiss Dental Academy's website](#).

Biofilm Dental technique GBT Prevention Preventive dentistry Prophylaxis



Faye Donald became a certified Swiss Dental Academy trainer in 2016 and has been a passionate advocate for Guided Biofilm Therapy ever since. (Image: Faye Donald)



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