Pediatric advanced life support (PALS) customized for dentists

By Heather Victorn

If you are a pediatric dentist, a family practice dentist who treats children or a dentist who performs pediatric sedation, you should consider taking a pediatric advanced life support (PALS) course.

Children are not simply small adults. Their anatomy and physiology is vastly different. Even practitioners who have attended advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) courses in the past should still seek additional PALS certification.

Leading sedation dentistry and emergency preparedness continuing education provider DOCS Education has expanded its curriculum to offer a top-in-the-nation PALS course customized for dentists.

Nearly every state requires dentists to have basic life support (BLS) or CPR for health care providers training. However, both courses only teach basic skills for sustaining a patient’s life and do not teach you how to use an automatic external defibrillator (AED) in the event of a cardiac emergency.

Furthermore, they do not address how to identify and treat the signs and symptoms that can lead up to a respiratory or cardiac emergency in children, particularly in the dental setting.

Recognizing these signs and symptoms can enable early intervention and prevent a small medical emergency from escalating into a large one.

Changes in behavior, mood or alertness can all be symptoms of an allergic response. Often times these first indicators of trouble are misinterpreted as simply nervousness or agitation. When taught to recognize the signs, the progression of respiratory and cardiac distress can often be resolved.

Because many of their allergies and sensitivities haven’t manifested themselves yet, treating children presents unique challenges.

“Children are history in motion,” says lead DOCS Education PALS instructor John Bovia, Sr. “Their history is developing moment by moment as they go through their formative years. They haven’t been labeled with certain allergies because they haven’t experienced them yet.”

DOCS Education’s PALS course teaches essential techniques for pediatric assessment and recognition of systems in distress, including airway obstruction, allergic reactions, respiratory insufficiency and hypoxemia.

Dentists learn standard pediatric emergency protocols and how to effectively run a MEGACODE emergency using dental office equipment.

The course also teaches participants how to use Broselow® Pediatric Tape, which provides pre-calculated emergency medication dosages based on a child’s height and weight.

Simulation is part of its foundation, and the course is designed to be user-friendly with an emphasis on practice drills performed on high-fidelity patient simulators.

These simulators provide real-time, real-world experience to maximize skill proficiency and preparation.

Training on how to use an AED on pediatric patients experiencing a cardiac emergency and understanding emergency drugs and their administration via intravenous and other alternate routes of administration are covered in detail.

The next DOCS Education PALS course will take place on Nov. 6 and 7 in San Francisco. To learn more or register, visit DOCSeducation.org or call (866) 592-9617.