Controlling fear, not just infection

By Patricia Walsh, RDH,
Hygiene Tribune Editor in Chief

They say ‘a miss is as good as a mile.’ Last week, in my New England dental practice, a miss was as good as 15. I no longer keep my cell phone in my lab coat pocket. While rereading every infection control step in the office, I had decided that my email obsession was germ laden. No more glancing at a screen in the hallway while the doctor is using the Veloscope light. I may not be susceptible to a missed enterovirus, but what about the child in my chair? What if I missed cleaning a patch of fingertip?

Prior to my 10 a.m. patient, I went into the staff room for my mid-morning hard boiled egg. I thought about how studies have shown that the “germiest” part of an office isn’t the bathroom, but the staff room door knob.

We eat, we touch our face. I joke about my mid-morning snacks coming with a Parelli chaser now. What percentage alcohol is it? At my age it is perhaps the closest thing I’ll get to a Jell-O shot. I pulled my phone from my purse and there it was. An NBC newsflash. A Yale graduate student, back from West Africa, had been admitted to the hospital for Ebola testing. I brought the screen out to our receptionist with the warning “don’t say anything.” My fear being that a patient might hear her gasp.

While Mr. Duncan still lay suffering in Dallas, I was reading “The Hot Zone.” A best seller from more than 20 years ago, it documents the discovery of the Ebola virus. I thought it was scarier than a Stephen King novel, mostly because it wasn’t fiction. It was all fact.

I speculated that my patients would be glued to their television screens and not come in for their dental appointments. What I experienced instead was what I now dub the “a/i/s effect.” Not only did they come in for their appointments, but they couldn’t wait to talk about the “big event.” Every single patient in my schedule, with the exception of a 6-year-old, sat in the chair and started to say, “Did you hear about that Yale student?” I could see the fear in their eyes. One patient told me she had just gotten off the phone with her daughter, who was a panic-stricken preschool teacher. Patients looked to me for infection-control information. They looked to me for reassurance in our community. Suddenly, I became the tribal medicine woman, the earth mother. My nursing abilities kicked in. The soothing voice usually reserved for toddlers became the tone of the day.

What really surprised me was my patients’ ready confidence in me. They felt as if anyone in health care would somehow be knowledgeable about every aspect of an international infectious disease. The Ebola experts would readily admit there is a great deal they don’t even know. It’s a double-edged sword and a huge responsibility. On the one hand, we are expected to display calmness and compassion above all else. On the other hand, when we show our humanness via frailty, misjudgment or misinformation — the public is not so forgiving. They blame the nurse.

By 5 p.m. I was back in the staff room looking at my phone. Twitter was reporting that the Yale student had tested negative and that there was an Ebola River in Zaire. On the other hand, when we show our humanness via frailty, misjudgment or misinformation — the public is not so forgiving. They blame the nurse.

The resulting “smart toothbrush” will make it possible for users to share resulting oral health information with their dental provider, enabling professional monitoring of such areas as brushing time, pressure and other data that will help users monitor and improve their oral health.

In addition to the various data measurements available at launch, it’s expected that a variety of new data-tracking capabilities will be added as consumer use of the smart toothbrush evolves.

Strips treat tooth sensitivity for a month

Paul Sagel, Procter & Gamble research fellow and inventor of Crest Whitestrips, spoke about the sensitivity treatment product the company released in September, Crest Sensi-Stop Strips.

The sensitivity relief strips are designed to provide immediate relief to people suffering sensitivity to cold, heat, acids or sweets — providing relief for up to a month.

“We have some very exciting innovations that are just now coming on the market or coming to market in the near future,” said Dave Shull, Procter & Gamble associate director. “And we thought this would be a great forum to be able to share new technology with members of ADA.”

About 500 attendees at the 2014 ADA annual meeting recently held in San Antonio accepted an open invitation from Crest Oral-B to attend “The Technology Changing Dentistry Reception” that the company scheduled on an evening during the meeting.

After enjoying drinks and appetizers in the Lila Cockrell Theatre at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, attendees listened to presentations from experts connected to two new products from Crest Oral-B, one just recently launched and another that will make its debut in January.

First ever ‘smart toothbrush’

Sarita Arteaga, DMD, MAGD, associate clinic professor at the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine and former president of the Hispanic Dental Association Foundation, shared information about the two-way Bluetooth wireless toothbrush technology Crest Oral-B is launching in January.

Noting the growing prevalence of smart phone apps for fitness and general health, Arteaga said the new technology essentially links a toothbrush to a smart phone via an oral health app.
Mark Twain said, “Wrinkles only mark where smiles have been.” Oral Health America wants every smile to be healthy, which is why its programs support increased access to oral health care and education for the nation’s most vulnerable populations, including older adults.

Older adults in the United States are facing a crisis when it comes to oral health care, with 70 percent of Americans age 65 and older not having a dental benefit and Medicare not including dental coverage. With 10,000 Americans turning 65 every day, according to the Pew Research Center, this oral health crisis is only going to continue to grow.

That is why OHA focuses on bringing needed oral health care and education to older adults through the Wisdom Tooth Project. The program includes a first-of-its-kind website, www.toothwisdom.org, designed to connect older adults and caregivers to expert articles about oral health issues facing older adults and to resources where they live.

The website also contains a section for health professionals so that those who work with older adults can get the most up-to-date information about oral health to use with their patients.

You can help support the work OHA does for older adults and all vulnerable Americans and ensure OHA reaches more Americans next year.

From now until the end of 2014, every dollar donated to OHA will be matched by Ivoclar Vivadent, up to $50,000.

To make a gift and double your impact, telephone (312) 836-9900 or visit online at www.oralhealthamerica.org/donate.

(Source: Oral Health America)
See What’s NEW
at GNYDM Booths 2012 and 5026

NEW Nike Retro Frames

SEE Designs for Vision’s NEW selection of Custom Built Dental Telescopes and LED DayLite® Headlights at the Greater New York Dental Meeting Booths 2012 and 5026

And take the 45 Day Challenge because all magnification is not created equal

LED DayLite® NanoCam™ HD

NEW Technology Enhancing Dental Surgery
2.5x, 3.5x and 4.5x lens systems to document and record from the dental surgeon’s perspective
HiDef 1080p Video Capture with Still Photos in Live or Playback Mode and Hands Free Operation

SEE IT THE BEST WITH A COMBO – both Dental Telescopes and LED DayLite® with discounted pricing

1/3 the weight of competing systems - Telescopes, Light and Cable shown here weigh less than 60 grams.
WANT TO GROW YOUR PRACTICE?

IS THIS YOU?

“I NEED MORE NON-INSURANCE PATIENTS IN THE DOOR”

“I DON’T KNOW HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA EFFECTIVELY”

“I KNOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS CRUCIAL TO GROW MY PRACTICE BUT I DON’T HAVE THE TIME OR RESOURCES”

“I’M STRUGGLING TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH PATIENTS BETWEEN VISITS”

Your Solution

Your Solution:

- Clinic, publish and maintain your social media channel with a regular post scheduled for your social media.
- The Likeable’s office marketing tool helps your practice to your marketing channel.
- Refer-a-friend mobile invitation to share the patient through your door.
- Hyper-targeted social media advertising to have reach to potential patients from your social media.

FREE MONTH
JUST MENTION THE CODE dentaltribune

TO LEARN MORE
AND SET UP A FREE CONSULTATION
GO TO LikeableDentists.com
OR CALL 212-359-4347