Advancements in dental technology offer better solutions for traditional oral health problems than ever before. Technology makes dentistry as comfortable, durable, efficient and natural-looking for the patient as possible. Patient and dentist benefit from newer techniques that are less invasive and more dependable than ever before. Procedures that formerly took multiple trips to the dentist or required multiple health care providers can now often be performed in the comfort of one surgery by one qualified provider.

Technology increases efficiency significantly. With the latest generation of dental equipment, patients see exactly what you see. This creates trust and empowers them to make decisions about their own care, and not rely purely on the first advice they're given.

Technology also helps with patient education and case acceptance. If someone is missing a tooth, the team can virtually place an implant and crown with 3D scans and show them exactly where the tooth will go. Patients can see digital X-rays and photos of their teeth blown up on flat screen monitors right in front of or above their dental chair.

Showing patients what's going on in their mouth, versus just trying to explain it, leads to quicker understanding and fewer questions, making both dental practitioner and hygienist's job easier.

A system that's going to particularly appeal to hygienists is Acteon's Air-n-Go.

This is the first dual purpose - supra and perio - air polisher. No other polisher better exemplifies the possibilities of combining the beauty and health of your patients' teeth. It speeds up treatment, maximising your time, while giving your patients the most gentle, yet powerful cleaning experience they've ever encountered.

Beauty and health in one simple, state of the art, system

Rachel Kendrick looks at Acteon’s Air-n-Go

A system that's going to particularly appeal to hygienists is Acteon’s Air-n-Go.
The ergonomic handpiece
The handpiece has been designed to create better working conditions for whoever handles it. It is fine, light-weight, well-balanced, easy to manipulate and has 360° rotation, resulting in less stress and less manual fatigue. It enables smooth, fast movement, improved visibility and excellent accessibility, even in the difficult to reach posterior areas. A non-slip silicone ring on the front gives you a better grip during treatment – even with wet gloves. Manipulation is precise to enable the practitioner to focus on the treatment area. Two exchangeable heads – short and long – are autoclavable. The shorter ‘hygienist’ head is specially designed for smaller hands and as it rests on the front gives you a better feeling of maintenance is enough to treat periodontitis or peri-implantitis effectively.

By pressing the ‘stop powder’ button, at the back of the tank, you cut off the powder flow, which transforms the air polisher into an air and water syringe. This feature allows you not only to clean the treated area, but also to rinse out the interior of the device.

Switching from supra mode to perio couldn’t be simpler or quicker. You select the nozzle, power and the tank – depending on the treatment – and then choose which mode you want without any need to change instrument.

This has the added benefit of needing only one direct connection to the delivery system and other convenience features include:• Three nozzles cover a variety of applications, including prophylaxis, periodontal and implant maintenance• Two exchangeable heads, a long and a short one, suit all hand sizes• Two tanks – supra and perio – come with a ‘Clip-n-Go’ connector (bayonet type) and a colour coding system for identification• Specific powders for each type of treatment: supra-gingival and sub-gingival applications• Autoclavable (except for the tank and its lid), all parts of Air-n-Go can be cleaned, to prevent the risk of clogging and to ensure the best hygiene in Supra mode, the indications are:

• Polishing – to finish after scaling or to prepare for bleaching• Cleaning – interproximal areas, fissures and troughs, preparation of the tooth surface before etching and orthodontic brackets• Removal – biofilm, plaque, stains and remnants of temporary cement

In Perio mode, the indications are: When combined with the action of ultra-fine glycine-based ‘Perio’ powder, the Air-n-Go is used for sub-gingival pockets of between 4-10mm, in addition to initial therapy. It provides remarkable thera-peutic results, with a consid-erable reduction of inflammation and pocket during the phase of initial periodontal treatment. And the nozzle comes with 5.6-9mm depth markings to allow rapid assessment of the health of a patient during sub-gingival treatments. The use of this device eliminates bacteria in the pocket and prevents recurrence of the disease.

And it’s worth noting here that ‘Perio’ powder can also be used in supra mode for the prevention and control of periodontitis and peri-implantitis in just 20 seconds is now possible.

The well-being approach to prophylaxis is a concept that is perfectly matched to the needs and wants of patients. The Classic range of Air-n-Go powders are indi-cated for maintenance, pre-vention of tooth decay and improving the oral hygiene of the patient. Their abrasive properties cause no damage to the enamel, the gingiva or the root surface.

This range comes in a va-riety of flavours that each patient chooses, according to individual taste. There is a choice of cola, raspberry, neutral, peppermint or lemon. The fine balance between flavour and sodium saccharin concentration removes any unpleasant taste and offers a feeling of freshness.

In addition to Classic, there is Pearl, a powder specifically designed for supra mode and Perio, exclusively for sub-gingival treatment.

Many patients think of a polishing session as an unpleasant experience, so the motivation to establish a maintenance plan fades quickly. Most sodium bicarbonate-based powders are very gentle, which avoids trauma to the delicate tissues and prevents the risk of clogging.

So what do patients think?

“Like many people, I’m afraid of going to the dentist and I hate having my teeth pol-ished. You have to admit that it hurts and isn’t pleasant at all. But this time, it was quite the opposite – completely differ-ent! During this session, I for-got my fear and felt no pain at all, although I’m very sensitive where my teeth are involved. It made me want to come back to my dentist.” Carlos, 31.

“The flavours I was offered are amazing. I wanted to try them all! In fact, I got carried away and tried two: peppermint and raspberry” Maya, 31.

“When combined with the action of ultra-fine glycine-based powder, the Air-n-Go is used for sub-gingival pockets of between 4-10mm, in addition to initial therapy. It provides remarkable therapeutic results, with a considerable reduction of inflammation and pocket during the phase of initial periodontal treatment. And the nozzle comes with 5.6-9mm depth markings to allow rapid assessment of the health of a patient during sub-gingival treatments. The use of this device eliminates bacteria in the pocket and prevents recurrence of the disease.”

The 20º angle of the perio nozzle means that all sides of the tooth or implant may be treated without changing instruments. It also means that treating periodontitis or peri-implantitis in just 20 seconds is now possible.

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Many patients think of a polishing session as an unpleasant experience, so the motivation to establish a maintenance plan fades quickly. Most sodium bicarbonate-based powders are composed of layered particles, with angular geometries which have an abrasive effect that is too aggressive on delicate tissues.

For this reason, Sata’s research and development department studied these angles and the shape of the nozzle came up with a formula that is more suitable. The new powder formulation they developed specifically reduces the sensation of pain and bleeding caused by most of the others on the market.

The anti-clogging and controlled hydrophilic properties of these powders give these patients a dual action effect:

• In contact with water, micro-particles shrink slightly: the polishing effect is much more efficient

• The powder dissolves gently, which avoids trauma to the delicate tissues and prevents the risk of clogging.

Rachel Kendrick is a freelance journalist with a special interest in the dental sector.