Easy and Accurate Provisional Restorations

Steven Miller provides practical tips to ensure success with provisional restorations

Drew Steven Miller, Associate Faculty of the Dawson Academy and Past President of The American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry provides reliable techniques on how to provide Easy and Accurate Provisional Restorations. Whether the treatment plan is a single restoration or a full mouth rehabilitation, the first step is always a Comprehensive Examination!

 Provisional restorations play a far more important role than just a transitional role while the laboratory fabricates the definitive restoration. Of course they function to protect the dentin and pulp from thermal, chemical, mechanical and bacterial damage, but there is much more...

They are adjusted for ideal aesthetics, phonetics and function. Provisional restorations provide the dentist, patient and dental laboratory with "in vivo" information, as the patient tests the restoration. Especially when changing aesthetics and function, feedback is obtained regarding contour, shape, incisal edge position, over-all aesthetics and function. When dealing with periodontal procedures, such as grafting, crown lengthening and implants, they serve as a great healing evaluation tool. Accurate records including photographs and mounted models of patient approved temporaries provide the laboratory with a functional prescription for the definitive restorations.

Whether the treatment plan is a few single restorations or a full mouth rehabilitation, the first step is always a comprehensive examination. Once we have confirmed stable dental health, the treatment planning process can proceed.

There are two patient scenarios that I will describe.

Patient one: Stable function, no aesthetic wants and minor restorative needs, such as a quadrant or less

My dental assistant takes a PVS quadrant impression in a triple tray, which is evaluated for voids and graphics that I will describe.

Patient two: Aesthetic and functional issues and has many more challenges

The examination process now includes mounted models with a centric bite and the Dawson photographic series. The accuracy of these records incorporating all teeth, gingival and vestibular areas is of paramount importance. The age old adage of garbage-in, garbage-out applies, so make sure to do a thorough examination and take accurate records.

The next step is quiet thinking time and utilizing the functional-aesthetic checklist. This checklist creates a problem list that includes the biological, structural, functional, and aesthetic components of a smile. It helps create a vision with the end in mind. That vision is then translated into the 3D architectural plan, the wax-up. The wax-up that incorporates the findings from the FE checklist is one of the most important steps for consistent predictable success.

Prior to the appointment, my dental assistant fabricates from the wax-up the Siltec Putty matrix that has been refined with a light body PVS, and place it on the articulator to register the opposing arch to guide the matrix accurately. We also make a Mini-Star vacuum formed clear matrix on a solid model of the wax-up. This clear matrix acts as a guide to visualise clearance and also can be used as a provisional matrix.

After the preparations are completed, we utilise either the Bis-acryl lock-on or the Bis-acryl remove and contour technique to fabricate the provisionals. After the margins and gingival embrasures have been developed, the B1 step provisional adjustment is developed by Dr. Dawson is utilised in the mouth. Phonetics, incisal length, centric stops, anterior guidance and long centric are all developed.

The patient is re-appointed with in a week for refinement, verification and after approval, records. These records include mounted models of the approved provisionals and the Dawson photographic series. Matrices and a custom incisal guide table are fabricated by the lab to communicate all the information. The definitive restorations are then created without guesswork.

This technique provides reliable, predictable and accurate provisionals that allows restorative dentistry to be less stressful and fun. Provisional restorations play a far more important role.

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