

Keeping Clinical Area Clean and Organized

This is a great opportunity for spring cleaning. Read this discussion for some great ideas. Log on to the message boards of Dentaltown.com today to participate in this discussion and thousands more.

Chip "CEREC" Payet

Posted: 1/2/2007

Post: 1 of 48

Total Posts: 23781



OK, here are some interesting (at least to me) questions for my Townie friends: How do you make sure that your clinical area is kept clean and organized? How much leeway do you allow your team in organizing the supplies, stocking rooms, that kind of thing?

Do you ever find that you waste time looking for stuff that you use all the time and which should be immediately handy? If so, do you determine for yourself how to organize areas, or do you give guidelines?

Do you ever designate one day every three, four, or six months to have the team come in and completely tear down the ops, clean everything/everywhere, and put it all back together?

Do you ever set times to specifically talk about how to improve efficiency and workflow in the operatories, or do you just think of ideas every once in a while and ask for something to be done?

In other words, how hands-on or hands-off are you when it comes to organization and cleaning of the clinical part of your office (operatories, storage, sterilization, and lab)?

The reason I'm asking is that I let my assistant go last week; she's a genuinely sweet lady who worked as hard as she knew how, but today I'm in the office doing some re-organization, clean-up, inventory, brain-storming on how to make our workflow more efficient, less wasted time and motion, easier to find things quickly, etc. What I'm learning is that our operatories, storage, and sterilization areas are horribly disorganized. ■ Charles D. Payet, DDS

Dr. Mac

Posted: 1/2/2007

Post: 3 of 48

Total Posts: 4014



Chip, I have to know where everything is... it's just my controlling nature. I place things where I want them, and the DA [dental assistant] works with it, if there is something that needs to be in a place that is more convenient for her, that's fine, just as long as she tells me where it is. I still go in sometimes after hours (like tonight as a matter of fact!) to see some patients (by myself), so it is imperative that I am organized. I usually will go in at least once a month (typically on a Saturday) and go through the ops to ensure that my supplies/equipment are in order, and make lists to order anything that I need. At the new office, I don't really know where anything is, so I have to rely on all the other girls' help. I absolutely hate that, but it's probably the way that it's "supposed to be." They always know where things are, and I haven't had any problems yet. If they arise, I will deal with them then.

I probably didn't help you much, but that's my two cents. ■ Matthew McMasters, D.D.S.

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F R MALOCH dds pc

Posted: 1/2/2007

Post: 5 of 48

Total Posts: 1387

Chip-

I went through the same thing three months ago. I moved into a new office in March 2006 and I had my trusty assistant move everything in where she felt they needed to be (bad idea). She left three months ago. I must have had my dental rep take back more than \$600 in unnecessary items that hadn't been opened and not out of date (had original receipts). I found lots of composite tips (like you did), tried to return them and found out I ordered them in 2001!

I went in over a long weekend while my wife and baby were out of town, removed everything and started organizing from scratch. Still tweaking, but well worth it.

You'll do a lot of cussing to yourself, but it will be worth it in the long run. I, too, find 16 shades of composite compules hard to organize, but ended up getting those organizers with little drawers for the very small stuff.

Good luck. I'd give you more info, but it's all about how you practice that determines how you set things up. ■ Rick Maloch, DDS

farmermv

Posted: 1/2/2007

Post: 7 of 48

Total Posts: 41

You have to do the organization. You would think they would jump at the chance to make decisions and have some say in how things are set up but they don't think about things the way that we do. You would be amazed at how limited they are. Set it up and organize it yourself then make them keep it clean. ■

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I am absolutely fanatic that everything should be exactly in its place and labeled so a monkey (with dental training) should be able to find it.

Buy a label maker... that's absolutely mandatory.

Buy accordion files to be kept in the operatory. I keep ours next to the computer tower. Nothing else really goes in that wasted space. Each tab is labeled and the forms that I need for patients are all in there. I have duplicate folders in each op. There are hygiene folders in hygiene ops. You should never have to get up to get an instruction sheet to hand to your patients.

My instruments are all kept in the sterilization room. I bag them according to procedure and they are stored in labeled drawers and bins from the hardware store. I do not keep any instruments in my individual rooms. I do keep handpieces and bur blocks (organized by procedure C&B [crown and bridge] or operative) in the drawer in my op. Top drawer on my side where I can reach it in an instant.

I have labeled bins in each op for restorative, endo and crown and bridge. For fillings I have two smaller stackable bins that I keep the bonding agent, flowable, composite gun, disposable well thingies and sealer in. I use those more frequently and want them right there. The composite is organized by shade in small tackle boxes and are kept in the drawer.

Keep your gloves, disinfecting wipes and everything inside drawers or bins. My assistant has a stash on her side of the saliva ejectors, 2x2s and cotton rolls. The Isolite mouthpieces are on her side in a drawer too. The only thing out on my counter when we aren't working is a hand mirror and a box of Kleenex. I found tons of organizing bins and holders at IKEA or Wal-Mart. It's cheap and makes things easy to find.

I let my staff come in when I have taken the day off. We change the air filter, scrub down the entire office and restock. I have my stock of clinical supplies on shelves in my lab. I have labeled cardboard bins for those too. I have all "dry" supplies (masks, gloves, chlorhexidine, etc.) in my storage room with the server on shelves. They are organized too.

Nice little gadget too. These little plastic thingies, shaped like a three dimensional figure eight. Bought them from smart practice... hooks on to your pvs to connect two tubes, makes you able to squirt the last little bit of impression material into another partially full tube. Just make sure you have them lined up right.

I'm a bit of a fanatic about things, but I guarantee I can find anything in less than 30 seconds. ■ Tamara L Bailey, DDS, MHA



drtammy

Posted: 1/2/2007

Post: 8 of 48

Total Posts: 12671

Chip-

Something that helped out immensely: Buy extra drawer dividers for the multi-drawer organizer. Get a hot glue gun so you can put the dividers in and create two, three or four compartments (instead of just two) for each drawer and they don't wiggle up and let everything slide around. ■ Rick Maloch, DDS

F R MALOCH dds pc

Posted: 1/2/2007

Post: 9 of 48

Total Posts: 1387

Wade is correct.

It's all about your assistants. Neat assistants equal neat office. I have a couple assistants who are very organized. Anything messy drives them crazy. One likes to label everything... good!

Once a year we throw out stuff we never use. Whenever I go on vacation for a few days I make a list to clean everything from top to bottom. That way the assis-

davidpalmer

Posted: 1/2/2007

Post: 15 of 48

Total Posts: 2642

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tants who are not taking vacation stay busy and helpful.

I have "junk" drawers at home but not in the office.

Hire "neat freaks."

Good luck. ■ David-TX

drtammy

Posted: 1/2/2007

Post: 17, 18 & 26 of 48

Total Posts: 12671



I took some pictures which I will post for you. This is how it looks when I just randomly pick up my camera and run in and take pictures. We were crazy busy today, had people stuffed in everywhere and this is how things looked.

The company that makes the impression material connectors is Practicon (www.practicon.com). The item is called Connector impression cartridge transfer connectors. The item number is 70-79010 and they are \$21.99 a package. I wish I had invented them.

Here are some pictures...



Far left: My composite storage "bins" – tackle boxes.

Right: My lab and the cardboard boxes for stuff.

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Ernest De Paoli, DDS

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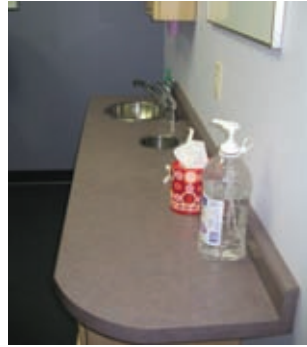
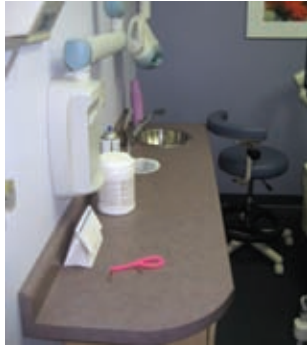
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Top far left:
Counter on the
left side of the op.

Top middle:
Counter on right
side. I lied, there
is a Kleenex box,
mirror and Purell.



[Posted: 1/2/2007]

Left: The bin system in my rear operatory cabinet.

Middle: Top drawer my side.

Right: Second drawer my side.

[Posted: 1/3/2007]

I basically have two bur set-ups. One for crown and bridge and one for operative. The operative one works great for accessing root canals. I think I have about five burs for each set-up. What I did was Scotch taped a set-up onto a piece of white paper and photo copied it. I taped it in the lab so she knows which burs go in which set up. We then wrote the numbers on the sheet so we know which number to re-order. The bur numbers and pictures are taped to the little drawers where we store our stock. You have to make it idiot proof or it won't get done.

If your assistant doesn't know what you want next, you might be using too many instruments. I use one instrument for placing posterior composites and a matrix. It's pretty easy for her to figure out what I need next. I use two instruments for placing anterior composites (they are double ended). She pretty much knows what I want there. Unless you want something weird, she should always be able to know what you need next. I swear my gal can read my mind... if I can't come up with a name for something, I sort of wave my hand and she knows what I'm asking for, it's kind of scary!

She dumps cotton rolls and used 2x2s in the bin as we work. I hate a messy work area. I keep the burs and polishing stuff on my side so I can grab something if it's out of the ordinary. If you find yourself reaching for something additional more than four or five times, it's time to add it to your "regular" set-up. ■ **Tamara L Bailey, DDS, MHA**

Do you have a comment to share? There is more to read online. Visit www.townicentral.com, type in "Clean and Organized" into the search text box and click, "Search." ■

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