

**Dentaltown editorial director Tom Giacobbi says:**

*Star Wars* made lasers weapons of destruction and defense, but dentistry turned lasers into an elegant instrument of bloodless surgery and minimal discomfort. Both hard- and soft-tissue lasers have found success in so many different areas of dentistry that they might one day be ubiquitous. If you don't currently own a laser, take some continuing education and find out more about the wonderful possibilities in laser dentistry.

**Townies are saying ...**

"I'd never been interested in laser dentistry—like many dentists, I thought, 'Why learn more if my treatment methods are already working with great results?' But in the right place at the right time, I decided to get an iPlus Biolase laser unit. I was too scared to touch it for about a month, but I became a member of the Academy of Laser Dentistry and started taking courses and reading books and articles. I can't imagine practicing without laser technology today. My students ask me how often I use it, and my answer is: "As often as I am able to." Some examples:

- Cavity preparation—without anesthesia, in most cases.
- Root canal treatment, for nerve removal and canal disinfection.
- Periodontal disease treatment, for pocket debridement and full-mouth decontamination.
- Oral surgery, when making an incision.
- Treating peri-implantitis.
- Pediatric dentistry, for caries removal, pulpotomies and frenumectomies. (And most can be done with topical anesthetics—no needles! You can't imagine how important this is for kids and their parents.)

**Dr. Natalia Elson**, clinical instructor, NYU College of Dentistry, New York, and clinical assistant professor, Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine, Stony Brook, New York  
"natulja"

"I had done very minimal surgery previously—I had an electrosurge, but hated setting it up and the smell. (I

recently sold it.) I used to refer all my perio, then wait for patients to come back. About a year ago I got a Biolase, and I've been doing crown lengthening as a closed procedure at the time of preparation for posterior teeth. I use the laser to detach the tissue, then change the setting and minimally reduce bone as needed. It's so much more convenient for the patient and for me.

Also, I never looked at frenum before. Now I see when a frenum is tugging on the marginal tissue, and I fix it! I've also done a few quadrants of periodontal surgery and gotten good results."

**Dr. Brenda Berkal**, Brenda Berkal Dentistry, Derry, New Hampshire  
"brendab\_dmd"

"A few reasons I was drawn to incorporating a diode laser into my practice:

- There's only a small learning curve from Day 1 forward on how and when to use a diode laser for tissue management.
- In most instance, troughing with a diode laser is not only easier than packing cord but also delivers an antibacterial effect that's medicament-free.
- Diodes can easily be used in the anterior or posterior, and seem to have a higher patient acceptance rate than an electrosurge.

**Dr. Mary J. Stahle**, Mary J. Stahle & Associates, Jackson, Michigan  
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