



College of Alberta Dental Assistants

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Position Statement

Lasers in Dentistry: The RDA's Role

Registered Dental Assistants may use a dental laser for in-office tooth whitening and curing dental materials only. The RDA must be able to demonstrate appropriate training and competence.

Appropriate training would include theoretical and clinical training and successful completion of a meaningful examination/evaluation to ensure competence in: use of the equipment, appropriate applications for the laser and safety measures for the patient and the dental personnel. As with any professional service, the RDA must provide only those services they are competent to perform, authorized to provide and that are appropriate to the situation.

It is the joint responsibility of the RDA and their senior professional to determine competence.

Rationale

Dental assistants have been indicating over the last few years that they are attending seminars and lectures on the use of lasers in dentistry. Some are indicating that they are using lasers for tooth whitening in the dental office. Tooth whitening is a procedure that dental assistants are permitted to perform in the dental practice.

Lasers deliver a controlled energy source (non-ionizing radiation) to a carefully limited area. Using a laser for tooth whitening can speed up the whitening process. Lasers may also be used in place of a curing light to promote the curing (hardening) of various dental materials. Dental assistants have been safely providing services of tooth whitening and curing of sealants and filling materials using a curing light for some time now.

Applying proper knowledge, skill and safety measures, the RDA may safely use lasers for the purposes of tooth whitening and curing restorative materials only.

It is the professional responsibility of the Registered Dental Assistant to ensure that all services are provided within the individual's registration, education and competence.

Guidelines for the Use of Dental Lasers by RDAs

(for tooth whitening and curing dental materials only as described in the corresponding position statement)

Use of a Dental Laser for Tooth Whitening and Curing Dental Material

- knowledge of indications and contraindications of dental lasers
- knowledge of types, methods and benefits of dental laser treatment
- knowledge of technology and documentation used to monitor performance of sterilizers
- knowledge of rationale for dental laser usage
- knowledge of risks associated with dental lasers
- knowledge of dental personnel safety issues
- knowledge of patient safety measures
- knowledge of isolation techniques
- knowledge of appropriate timing of treatment
- knowledge of proper cleaning, sterilization, and maintenance of equipment
- ability to select and use appropriate armamentarium
- ability to apply standard precautions including PPE for operator and patient
- ability to identify site to be treated
- ability to apply isolation techniques
- ability to manage patient/client as required
- ability to advise patient/client/agent of post-treatment care
- ability to clean, sterilize, and maintain equipment according to manufacturers' instruction
- ability to monitor the performance of the equipment

Theoretical Training

- read manufacturers instructions on proper use for safe and effect handling, performance, cleaning and sterilization, and maintenance of equipment
- complete on-line training when available
- if you cannot obtain all required knowledge through manufacturers instruction or product representative you will need to do the research via sales representatives, product companies, internet, networking prior to using the dental laser

Clinical Training

- must be legally able to perform the intra-oral skills of liners, pit and fissure sealants, desensitizing agents, and rubber dam
- must attend a product demonstration by a product representative or individual competent in its use
- must be supervised by a senior professional at all times while performing dental laser treatment until such time competence is achieved

It is the joint responsibility of the RDA and the senior professional to determine competence.