

## CENTRIX

# Coach Your Patients Well

*In the fight against rising caries in adults, coaching patients to understand their caries risk and take charge of their oral health can be an unexpected practice booster*

No kid makes it through childhood without a well-meaning adult warning them, "That candy will rot your teeth!" While that may be true, it's not just children who are at risk. "It is so common for adults to misguidedly believe that they are at less risk for caries than their children," said Jean L. Creasey, DDS, a CAMBRA lecturer and private practitioner in Nevada City, CA. She advises patients that caries susceptibility in fact increases over time due to factors like gingival recession, decreased salivary function, or diet changes. "Helping patients understand their risk factors is key to them taking control of their disease experience."

For Dr. Creasey, prevention starts with the new patient exam, which she said sets the tone for future patient interactions. "My message is clear that the patient is in charge of their oral health experience, so my role is more of a coach rather than a repair person," she said, adding that getting patients to change behaviors to lessen their dental caries is just as

challenging as losing weight, quitting smoking, or exercising. "Simply telling a patient what to do to have better health outcomes is rarely successful in eliciting lasting change. Patients are more likely to change if they truly understand the 'why.'"

### Understanding the Risk

One way Dr. Creasey helps patients to get to "why" is by using a simple risk assessment form that easily captures the patient's oral health and shows them what their risk status is, as well as what it means for them individually. Centrix's Prevention For Life materials—all based on findings from the ADA Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry—include tools and products that make this discussion fast and easy.

"The Prevention For Life program enables our team to make our adult patients more aware of their caries risk and accept the treatment they need," said Dr. Creasey.

When it comes to the fluoride varnish conversation, Dr. Creasey's patients have been very accepting.



"I tell them about the benefits of fluoride, such as root desensitization and building stronger tooth mineral that's less prone to demineralization," she said, adding that the fee for applying varnish is small compared with the cost of a restoration. "I like that FluoroDose is a slow-release formula that stays effective for 4 to 6 hours. It sets quickly and feels smooth."

### A Prevention Engine

A dental practice that puts so much time and effort into disease prevention might just prevent itself right out of business, right? "Our practice supports 450 hygiene appointments and sees around 35 new patients every month," said Dr. Creasey. "We of course still see recurrent caries, but much less than 30 years ago. Our patients view us as expert partners who are helping them achieve their goals, and they don't hesitate to send their friends our way!"

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

203.929.5582 | [www.centrixdental.com](http://www.centrixdental.com)

## PREVENTION TOOLBOX

To find out more about the Prevention For Life movement and sign your practice up for a free in-office lunch & learn worth 2 CE credits, visit [cariesprevention.com](http://cariesprevention.com).

