

Tips for Successful Impressions

Taking an impression is one of the most important procedures in dentistry and it is critical to achieve an exceptional restoration. We need an excellent “foundation” on which to build. We have put together a list of tips to help you take a great impression, which will ensure the best restoration possible:

TIP

Use a metal tray or a stiff plastic tray for the impression.

REASON

If the tray can be easily flexed with finger pressure, the impression material will likely flex during setting and yield a distorted impression.

TIP

Use a custom tray for patients that may need one for the impression.

REASON

Properly constructed custom trays help take impressions with over five times more dimensional accuracy than stock trays. Note: Custom trays should be made at least a day in advance, since most tray acrylic undergoes shrink polymerization within that period of time.

TIP

Use tray adhesive on all impression trays, even for those with perforations.

REASON

With adhesive, the polymerization shrinkage is toward the tray instead of toward the center of the mass.

TIP

We do not recommend using fast set for your crown and bridge impressions (use it for opposing impressions).

REASON

With the fast set, the wash is already polymerizing before the tray is even loaded, causing them to set at different rates.

TIP

Be aware of the effects of the sulfur compounds on Latex gloves.

REASON

Sulfur found on Latex gloves inhibits the set of many impression materials. Sulfur contamination can be avoided by: 1) remove gloves and wash hands before molding putty, 2) use vinyl gloves, 3) use vinyl over-glove and 4) don't touch the teeth with the gloves.

TIP

Time all impressions, based on manufacturer's suggested time, plus one minute.

REASON

The extra minute helps prevent tearing of the margins during removal.

TIP

Do not have your patient hold the impression.

REASON

Firm, consistent pressure needs to be maintained after placement by a trained hand.

TIP

Do not disinfect the impressions before sending to the lab.

REASON

We will disinfect here and the products we use in the lab may have an adverse reaction to the products you use in the office. Simply rinse the impression with cold water immediately and place in the biohazard bag.

TIP

Check the expiration date of the impression material.

REASON

Expired impression material will often function abnormally and will not set properly.

TIP

Keep mix tip of the impression material submerged in the material while filling the tray.

REASON

Air bubbles can be formed when the syringe tip is in the open and lead to voids in the margin area.

TIP

Use a full arch tray when restoring any more than one posterior tooth.

REASON

This allows us to see the entire arch of the opposing teeth and how they fit together, allowing for a better restoration.

TIP

Assistant loading tray material should occur at the same time doctor is injecting around the prep.

REASON

If the tray is loaded too far in advance, the material will begin setting and force the wash material away from the margins.

TIP

With “gaggers,” use a custom tray with open palate, a quadrant tray or a lower tray for upper impressions.

REASON

These techniques will make it easier to keep impression material away from the soft palate.