Recare protocol for implant-supported restorations: A chairside guide

The long-term success of dental implants as well as lasting patient satisfaction with implant therapy depend on proper maintenance and follow-up care. Studies have demonstrated that periodontal pathogenic bacteria can seed healthy implant sites. There is also evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship between bacterial plaque accumulation and development of inflammatory changes in soft tissue around dental implants.


STEP 1: Evaluation of the Occlusal Seal/Prosthesis Stability

**Occlusal Seal:**
If the prosthesis is screw-retained, the integrity of the occlusal restoration over the screw-access opening should be evaluated.

**Prosthesis Stability:**
Using two mirror handles, an attempt should be made to move the implant-supported prosthesis. Any sign of movement may indicate cement wash-out or screw loosening. The security of both cement- and screw-retained restorations should also be tested by attempting to lift the crown or fixed prosthesis with gloved fingers and/or an instrument. No movement or salivary percolation (bubbles) should be detected.

STEP 2: Analysis of Oral Hygiene

**Oral Hygiene:**
The patient’s oral hygiene (self-care) should be evaluated by noting the presence or absence of hard and/or soft deposits, along with the health of the surrounding soft tissue. Biofilm formation may result in peri-implant mucositis, similar to gingivitis; peri-implant mucositis is reversible with proper care. The use of any adjuncts that may optimize self-care (e.g., a power brush) should be discussed.
Polishing:
For polishing, no single prophylaxis paste works equally well on all tooth surfaces and aesthetic restorations. The only polish that should be used on dental implant components and aesthetic restorative materials is one that will not damage the surface.

By carefully and routinely evaluating patients’ soft-tissue health and the stability of the prosthesis at professional recare appointments, the dental implant team can help ensure the long-term success of the implant-supported prosthesis and a continued high level of patient satisfaction.

References