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Professional Resources

Tooth Preparation

By Jeffrey C. Hoos, DMD

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Dentistry may be considered the only health science in which amputation has been the standard of care. We, as members of the healing arts, have used the "take-away" mentality as a method for providing optimal care for our patients. In finding the balance between the art, science, and business of dentistry, a new paradigm has emerged of saving tooth structure to improve the dental health of our patients; once cut away, it is forever gone.

The shift toward minimally invasive procedures has been a long time in the making. Clinicians have been attempting to maintain as much natural tooth structure as possible since the advent of tooth-colored restoratives. These tooth-colored restorative materials allow us to provide beautiful "art" dentistry. Science and technology, meanwhile, have provided materials that do not require excessive destruction of tooth. As material sciences have evolved away from materials that require excessive removal of tooth structures for retentive purposes, so too have tooth-preparation materials evolved.

As patients continue to demand aesthetic results with minimal discomfort and maximum retention of natural tooth structures, clinicians will be challenged to deliver less invasive procedures that address their patient's desires. We, as doctors of the mouth, should welcome with open arms the wonderful shift toward conservative, minimally invasive dental care.

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