



# Comprehensive perio course

Practicing clinical hygiene as a periodontal therapist and consulting in private practice has offered Colleen Rutledge, RDH, the unique perspective from which she empowers her course participants to elevate their own practices to higher levels. Throughout her program, “Periodontal Therapeutics and Beyond: Exceed Today’s Standard of Care While Increasing Office Production,” she challenges dentists, hygienists, and entire dental staffs to elevate their hygiene departments to periodontal therapeutic levels.

Research has proven that periodontal health is linked to systemic health. As dental professionals, Colleen believes that we need to bridge the gap between those who are diagnosed with periodontal disease and those that remained undiagnosed. With 20-plus years of experience in dentistry, Colleen introduces her concept of the “Edentulous Propy” within her program. This concept broadens hygienists’ and staffs’ knowledge regarding assessment and treatment of denture-wearing patients. She also shares her experiences with the use of locally applied antibiotics, host modulation, and other periodontal therapeutics — all of which can easily be used on Monday morning when participants return to their practices.

### Components of seminar

The program is divided into several components. Each section deals with a variety of periodontally related issues that can bring the hygiene team to its optimum level. First, Colleen discusses the impact that periodontal disease has on systemic health. She defines periodontal disease as a chronic, gram-negative infection, and explains the role that it has in many systemic conditions.

Colleen discusses the hygienist’s role in education and how we can go about providing a comprehensive treatment protocol. Colleen delves into the use of radiographs, medical histories, periodontal charting/probing, oral cancer screenings, fluoride treatments, and tongue hygiene.

In the radiographic section, she discusses the appro-

priate use of bitewings, panoramic film and the full-mouth series. During the medical history and periodontal component, Colleen goes beyond the traditional charts for medical history and probing, and also includes information regarding the use of ADA-approved forms and the legally necessary signatures. For cancer screening, she introduces and reinforces information regarding the use of the brush biopsy and chemiluminescence. Discussions on fluoride and tongue hygiene, along with the use of ultrasonics, round out this clinical section of the program.

Colleen then directs her attention to the “edentulous” hygiene appointment, where she includes information on oral disinfection, denture care, home care instruction, oral cancer screening, and nutritional counseling. This brings into focus all of her information to culminate in the birth of a periodontal therapist.

As a periodontal therapist, Colleen believes hygienists should understand all of the implications that contemporary periodontal therapy entails. When should the hygienist refer a patient to the periodontist? Colleen discusses that in the periodontal intervention-awareness portion of the program, along with the introduction of the host modulation response to course participants. During this section, she also includes information on the importance of locally applied antibiotics, including Atridox, Arestin, and tetracycline gel, and the indications for Periostat use.

How does a hygienist incorporate information from the program into his or her actual practice? Colleen has formulated five essential steps for patient compliance to make that happen. These include: laying the foundation,

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## From the Podium

communication, radiographs, periodontal charting and review of findings with the patient. These steps, in turn, allow for the treatment plan that can include the actual plan, establishing goals for the patient, and referral to the periodontist if needed.

Scheduling for increased hygiene production is also an essential component for success. Colleen demonstrates her recipe for success by maximizing scheduling through the use of assisted hygiene procedures and proper ADA insurance codes. Colleen feels that dentists, hygienists, assistants, office managers — in fact, the entire dental team — would benefit from taking this program.

### **Personal background**

Colleen is a graduate of the Coastal Carolina Community College dental hygiene program, which she attended after graduating and working as a dental assistant for several years. She is also a member of the ADHA, Linda Miles Speaking and Consulting Network, and Arestin/ OraPharma Speakers Bureau, as well as owner of “Perio-Therapeutics and Beyond,” a company which offers services to empower and elevate hygiene departments and increase office production.

Colleen feels that her view of the dental hygiene profession changed when she attended her first course on host modulation in 1998. This breakthrough, as well as

the ongoing research into the systemic link, drove her to bring her clinical practice to a higher level. She felt that many hygiene departments were not evolving with these changing trends and, thus, her program and consulting were born.

Colleen believes that hygienists are looking for a comprehensive and financially sound periodontal program. Because of this, she spends a lot of time preparing her program, especially her handouts. She states that it is very organized, so that participants can focus on the lecture itself and not be scrambling to write everything down.

On the more personal side, Colleen has a deep commitment to her family (her husband, Bill, and children, Billy, Ryan, and Danielle). She is very spiritual and is active at her church, along with school functions and Cub Scouts.

Colleen also has programs on “The Hygienist’s Dream, the Perfect Appointment,” “Transforming Your Practice from Ordinary to Extraordinary,” and “Incorporating Periodontal Therapies into Your Practice.” To learn more about any of her programs, or to see what others say about her programs and consultations, Colleen can be reached via her Web site, [www.perioandbeyond.com](http://www.perioandbeyond.com) or for speaking engagements through Cross Country University Seminars, (800) 397-0180 or [JWJones@ccuseminars.com](mailto:JWJones@ccuseminars.com).