



Grace Schroeder - General Office Visitation

Philip C. Gissel, DDS – Cosmetic and Family Dental Care

General Office Visitation

Location: Philip C. Gissel, DDS - FAMILY DENTAL CARE; 366 E 40th Ave. Suite 210, Eugene, OR 97405

Date: May 21, 2015

Hours: 7:45 AM – 5:00 PM

Staff

Dr. Gissel – Dentist

Erica – Office Coordinator

Chris – Dental Hygienist

Aubrey – Dental Hygienist

Michelle – Lead Assistant

Holly – Assistant

Nancy – Office Manager (and Dr. Gissel's wife)

Renee – Fill-in Hygienist who was working while Aubrey was off the day I observed

The staff members wear matching long sleeve floral jackets. They have these jackets in brown and blue, and everyone wears the same pallet on the same days.

In this office, they start the day 15 minutes prior to patient treatment with a “morning huddle.” During the huddle, the hygienists and dentist present what patients they will be treating that day, including any outstanding concerns, when last appointment was, plans for treatment and what updated information is needed. The huddle serves to keep everyone on staff informed on what is happening in the clinic so that more efficient teamwork and productivity can take place. With everyone being aware of the day's tasks, it allows all team members to help when needed.

For instance, if a hygiene appointment runs over the allotted time, then the assistant will be aware of this and can seat the next patient, do the medical history, and/or even begin taking needed radiographs.

According to Erica at the front desk, this office tries to be as “paperless as possible.” As far as paper goes, the office provides written post-op instructions to patients and also has some signed paperwork that is filled out, scanned into their computer patient tracking system, and then shredded. The software used in this office is Dentrrix. This program has templates for everything from medical histories to treatment plans to specific chart notes for treatments rendered. Though patients are asked if they have updates to their medical history at each appointment, a formal health history update is taken every two years. Bitewing radiographs are generally updated every 6 months, and full mouth series are taken every 3 to 5 years once the patient reaches adulthood. If insurance will not cover radiographs at these frequencies, bitewings are taken every year. Patient insurance coverage information is kept updated in Dentrrix so the hygienist can refer to it before doing procedures that may or may not be covered. Perio charts are updated every 6 months.

With the Dentrrix system, Chris demonstrated that she was able to “train” her headset to recognize voice commands. This allows her to perio chart without an assistant and without having to mess with manually typing in probing depths, furcations, recession, etc. This was an impressive way of minimizing the amount of time needed for assessment procedures. Another way that Chris says the hygienists help to increase productivity is to try to schedule all patients’ next appointment (whether it is perio scaling, maintenance, prophylaxis, etc.) while they are still in the operatory. Each hygienist at Dr. Gissel’s sees 7 to 8 patients per day; they will see more if

there are children. Most prophylaxis and maintenance appointments are 1 hour long, root planing appointments are 1.5-2 hours long, and new hygiene patients usually have 1.5 hour appointments for assessments and so the hygienists can build proper patient rapport. New patient appointments also include a full mouth series of radiographs, comprehensive exam with the dentist, and perio charting. If there is time, the hygienist will begin treatment. Chris does her best to keep her own schedule full and reports that this leaves minimal scheduling of new hygiene patients to be done by the front desk, thereby allowing the front desk to concentrate on more scheduling for the dentist and making appointment confirmations. Confirmations are typically done two business days in advance.

Erica also usually prints the following day's schedule in advance and puts it into green charts so that it can be reviewed if any of the clinicians has down time. The paperwork are routing slips that include billing information and outlines a brief medical history, family, insurance information, what updates are needed, and what treatments are planned. These slips simplify appointments by providing the clinician with information that is pertinent to the day's treatment. For maintenance visits and prophylaxis, needed radiographs are taken at the beginning of the appointment and needed perio charts are completed at the end of the appointment prior to dismissal.

Abbreviations are used to denote types of appointments/procedures in the computer scheduling system. These are fairly simple to figure out for those who know the terminology, and include REPM (recall and perio maintenance), CHRE 4BWX (child prophylaxis and recall with 4 bitewings), and RPC or SRP (root planing) with the quadrant (UL, UR, LL, LR) included.

This office is also equipped with a Porter Call System. This is a panel in each room that beeps when patients arrive and blinks to let the dentist know which operatory is ready for him, etc. When the dentist enters the room to do an exam, the hygienists like to say the patient's first name in a sentence so that the dentist knows the name of the person he will be addressing. Dr. Gissel is reminded of what watches are in place in the patient's dental chart, and any other concerns the patient may have. The hygienist updates the digital chart as the dentist gives her information from his exam. Within the chart, needed treatment shows up in red, treatment completed by Dr. Gissel and/or his staff is blue, and any restorations that were preexisting when the patient first came to the office are shown in black. Dr. Gissel is also very keen on taking before, during, and after pictures of his patients and their various stages of treatment to add to the patient charts.

For the treatment of patients, I paid special attention to Chris and how she manages them as a hygienist, since she was the full-time hygienist who was working the day I observed. Although each hygiene room (there are two rooms) is equipped with a Cavitron 30k prophyljet, Chris reports that she typically only uses the ultrasonic or air powder handpieces if her patients present with stain or with maintenance patients. Also at her disposal are various treatment and homecare aids such as American brand sodium fluoride varnish, a potassium nitrate varnish for sensitivity, sharpening stones, perio-aids, toothbrushes and paste, chlorhexidine rinses, floss, "Quick Picks," and demonstration typodonts. She sharpens her instruments once per week, and has a system for circulating them so that she does not use dulled sets. She sets up her trays and places them in a rack in her operatory. When she uses a set of instruments and processes them in the sterilization room, she brings the clean trays back and places them back into the rack, but turned 90-degrees so that she knows which trays are still sharp. The set ups for each tray

[whether for SRP or prophylaxis] include the same basic instruments: Gracey 11/12 and 13/14, Barnhart 1/2 and 5/6, anterior sickle, mirror, probe, and explorer. Additional services provided by the hygienists at Dr. Gissel's office include the creation of at-home bleaching trays (they do not do in-office whitening), anesthesia for hygiene and the dentist [as needed], and the occasional placement of sealants. Chris also explained that periodontal referrals are only made if the efforts of their clinical staff are not showing improvement.

The standard of care in this office was fairly comparable to that of the LCC Dental Clinic. Although not as many notes are made during assessments in regards to tissue statements, etc., the hygienists still take these pieces of information into account when making their diagnoses. Another difference I noted was that they used minimal barriers and instead wiped most surfaces. From what I observed, this office takes asepsis and infection control very seriously. I was actually impressed with how they maintained a sterile environment in a lot less time. It helped me to realize just how doable it is to see many patients every day (which is something I am definitely not used to yet).

This was a very fun and upbeat, yet super professional office. All the staff members there were so helpful, warm, and welcoming. I really enjoyed my visitation and was glad to observe somewhere that made me excited for when I am working in an office soon. This was a very enlightening experience.