

Are your kids caries-free?



Liran Levin

Do your kids have caries lesions? Do they suffer from periodontal disease? Although not evidence-based, one could assume that the answer to those two questions by most of the readers of this editorial will be no. After all, we are all dental professionals and we have knowledge and experience that can guide us to grow our children in a way that they will not suffer from the two most important oral diseases. Dental caries is the most common infectious disease affecting humans, and we, the dental professionals, manage to save our kids from this disease. How do we do it? Probably by instilling proper oral hygiene habits, with maybe some fluoride supplementation and dietary guidance as well; not too complicated. If most of the readers of this piece have more or less succeeded in this mission, it is at least feasible with reasonable effort.

The dental profession has progressed tremendously during the last few decades. We now have advanced technology, innovative materials, computer-guided techniques, and high-end instruments. The puzzling question is, why, during the last few decades, couldn't we eliminate or at least almost totally prevent dental caries? Why are our kids almost caries-free but our patients are not? How do we rather easily have our own

children without a single cavity but when it comes to our patients, or our patients' children, we fail to do so?

One of the answers is probably a lack of active education. Active education for prevention is one of the important roles we tend to ignore or partially disregard. It is our responsibility to make sure that our patients know what to do, how to do it, and why, in order for them not to suffer from further oral diseases. It is our duty to teach them the secret of raising caries-free children. Even when we think they do not appreciate the information enough or don't even listen, we should not give up. If we know how to do that, and we are responsible for their oral health, it is almost negligence from our side not to actively share that information. Sharing means explaining, demonstrating, re-encouraging, reinforcing, and continuously insisting on oral health promotion. This will serve our patient population more than many of the latest technological advancements we have achieved and perused. This will really make a long-term difference to the well-being of our patients.

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