

TROJANTODAY

The Newsletter for Today's Dental World

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IN THIS ISSUE

**FEATURE: TREATING THE
GINGIVITIS PATIENT**

**ASK THE CONSULTANT:
PANO X-RAY & 4
BITEWINGS OR FMX**

**SERVICE SAVVY:
ARE YOU MAKING
HARDWARE UPGRADES?**

Treating the Gingivitis Patient

by Debbie Seidel Bittke

According to the CDC, 47.6% of the US adult population has some level of gum disease.¹ Looking at these statistics, we have a lot of work to do to conquer this disease.

Treating gingivitis will boost your hygiene department's profitability and help hygienists STOP solely cleaning teeth! Treating gingivitis lets us share a very important message: "A healthy mouth leads to a longer, healthier life."

WHAT ROLE DOES THE DENTAL PROFESSIONAL HAVE?

If we see our primary care provider and they find a pre-cancerous lesion, do they inform us or not? Do they withhold that information, concerned that our insurance may not pay for a biopsy? Of course not! We have a legal and ethical obligation to complete exactly what our patients need.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



Prevention Costs Less Than Treating Disease.

All dental professionals are in the business of helping patients live a longer and healthier life. Our primary business is not dictated by what insurance companies will pay. Insurance companies don't treat patients. We do.

**FOR WHAT PATIENT is CODE D4346 GINGIVITIS TREATMENT not INTENDED?**

Important to note: gingivitis means *no radiographic bone loss*.

D4346 GINGIVITIS TREATMENT treats generalized moderate to severe gingival inflammation without bone loss. The gingivitis code is not used when your patient is overdue for their hygiene appointment.

The gingivitis code is not used when your patient has heavy supra-gingival calculus, slight inflammation, and radiographic bone loss. The gingivitis code is not used when your patient needs non-surgical periodontal therapy (SRP).

Treating your gingivitis patient takes time. Plan enough time for the appointment to cover all items you need to complete in a hygiene appointment. Do not rush the appointment if they arrive late. See the following graphic for a guideline on gingivitis appointment time management (Diagram A).

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

What They Say about Trojan

Knowledgeable staff. Always helpful over the phone. Provides notices on new regulations. Overall great communication.

Collection Services client
Escondido, CA

Your goal is not solely clean teeth. You are in the business of dentistry to create a healthy body creating a longer life.

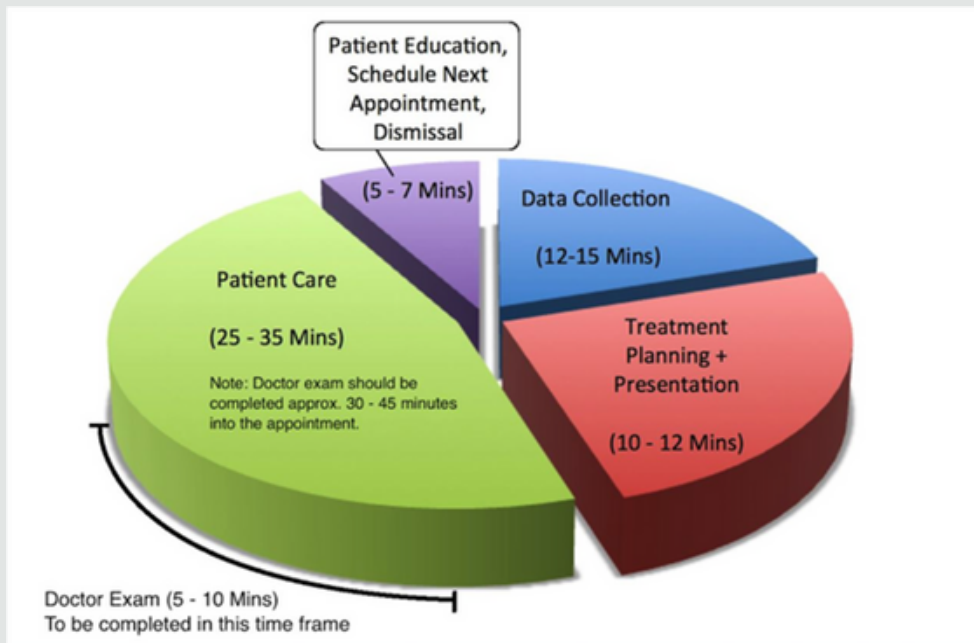


Diagram A. Time Management Formula

WHAT IS THE PROPER TREATMENT FOR A GINGIVITIS PATIENT USING CODE D4346?

Always begin with an updated medical history review and a comprehensive periodontal examination (CPE).²

What does the CPE include?²

- Review of Medical History/Blood Pressure Screening/Medications
- Update
- Current Radiographs
- Plaque/Calculus Levels
- Full Mouth, Six-Point Measurements
- Recession
- Bleeding On Probing
- Furcation
- Mobility
- Mucogingival Involvement
- Occlusion
- Caries Assessment

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



Is your office making changes to your practice computers or Practice Management software?

If your office is planning to:

- Upgrade your Practice Management System to a new version
- Upgrade any workstations or the main server (replacing or getting additional computers)
- Convert to a new/different Practice Management System than what you are currently using in the office

Contact Trojan's Software Support. Depending on your current or new Practice Management System, specific programs may need to be installed.

The Henry Schein (Dentrix, Easy Dental software) and Patterson (Eaglesoft) products require reinstalling their Trojan integration software. Trojan does not provide this software. Please get in touch with your vendor for assistance.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF USING DENTRIX AND THE OFFICE UPGRADES TO G6.2 OR HIGHER, YOU WILL NEED TO OBTAIN THE DENTRIX TROJAN 6.1.45 INSTALL FILES FROM DENTRIX SUPPORT FIRST BEFORE TROJAN CAN LOAD OUR BENEFIT PLANS.

Other Trojan programs that may require reinstallation:

- Trojan Benefit Service Program
- Trojan Eligibility Program
- Trojan Managed Care program
- Trojan DrDirect Electronic Claims
- Trojan Communicator
- Trojan Express Collect

To answer questions before you begin, please call Trojan Software Support at:

800.451.9823 ext. 1.

To make an appointment with support, go to www.trojanonline.com, go to APPOINTMENT CALENDARS, and choose the General Support Questions calendar to schedule a support call time that is convenient for you.

If your IT Company is needed for any reinstallation, please provide them with the number to Software Support. Our representatives would be more than happy to speak with them.

Software Support 800.451.9723 ext. 1

Taking intra-oral images of what you see during the visual exam is extremely helpful. Images will enhance your patient's ability to "*Own Their Disease*."

This next step is crucial for your patient to *Own Their Disease*. Sit your patient upright in the dental chair, sitting knee-to-knee and eye-to-eye. Review the images you took while guiding your patient to see exactly what you see. Let them see what is happening in their mouth as you educate them.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF TREATING GINGIVITIS (D4346)?

Code D4346 helps your patient understand their mouth is connected to their body and overall health. Now is your time to talk about oral inflammation and how it can lead to other health issues such as heart attack stroke, diabetes, kidney disease, Alzheimer's, etc.³



When treating any disease in your patient's mouth, your overall message is this: A healthy mouth leads to a longer, healthier life.

Simply cleaning teeth is no longer your goal!

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

QUOTE-WORTHY

“ To provide whole-person, integrated, patient-centered, comprehensive care, it is important to connect the mouth with the rest of the body. ”

-Natl. Academy of Medicine

WHAT DOES A D4346 VISIT LOOK LIKE?

During this visit, your main concern is NOT getting the patient's teeth sparkly clean!

Use the following as a guide for a D4346 visit:

- Consider using a soft-tissue diode laser to perform Laser Bacterial Reduction (LBR).
- Use ultrasonics *over/in* the entire mouth.
- Hand-scale (remove the supra) and polish teeth.
- Reinforce the importance of routine hygiene care appointments.
- Provide post-op and home care instructions, along with oral-hygiene care education.
- Schedule your patient for a re-evaluation in 4-6 weeks (in most cases, this will be a prophylaxis appointment).

Your patient may not improve their gingivitis condition in 4-6 weeks. If this is the case, you will re-treat for gingivitis. If your patient's gingivitis does not improve within 4-6 weeks, suggest your patient visit their primary care physician to discuss scheduling a blood panel to rule out systemic disease. It is not uncommon, with persistent gingivitis, for the patient's blood tests to identify diabetes and other systemic diseases.

Fact: Diabetes usually goes undiagnosed for at least seven years.

Until the inflammation and active disease are halted, your patient should return for the above services every 4-6 weeks.

Remember, your goal is to support your patient with a healthy body and longer life. Active disease should be halted before you move them to longer maintenance intervals. Unresolved gingivitis patients may need a referral to a specialist and more frequent intervals for hygiene appointments.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

HOW CAN YOU GET D4346 REIMBURSED BY THE INSURANCE COMPANY?

If you take the time to ensure your clinical notes include all that the CPE showed, the time you took for patient education, and any treatment performed, you can easily copy the notes into the insurance narrative. *Always bill exactly what services you completed.*

Send the insurance company your CPE findings and a narrative describing the patient's current gingival condition. In the narrative, write generalized moderate-severe inflammation. Communicate with the patient's insurance that you have up-to-date x-rays, FMX, or Bitewing x-rays. You must show an exam (D140, D150, or D120) was completed with a diagnosis.

To learn about treating the gingivitis patient, and earn Continuing Education credits, follow this link: <http://bit.ly/3l0yxkO>

References.

1. Eke P, Thornton-Evans G, Wei L, Borgnakke W, Dye B, Genco R. Periodontitis in US adults: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2009-2014. JADA. 2018;149(7):576-586.
2. Comprehensive Periodontal Exam (CPE) <https://bit.ly/CPEAPPLINK> (Accessed January 31, 2023).
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debbie Seidel Bittke RDH, BS is the founder and CEO of Dental Practice Solutions, a dental coaching business focused on optimizing the hygiene department. Debbie created Celebrity Smiles Club, a patient retention - rewards system to keep patients on your schedule and grow New Patient numbers.

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with your Patients,
Not Insurance
Companies.**



Ask the Consultant

Answer by Debbie Seidel Bittke



Q: Will an insurance company accept a Pano x-ray and 4 bitewings as a FMX when billing root planing and scaling? Another office shared this information. Is it true?

A: Yes, a Pano and 4 bitewing x-rays will be considered a set of full mouth x-rays by most insurance companies.

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