

INSTRUMENT OF THE MONTH

Dressing Pliers



Why it pays to invest in your instruments.

Judy Bendit, RDH, BS shares why it pays to spend a little more...

Every office has criteria for how and why they buy materials and equipment. Perhaps it is a specific brand, a price point, or a relationship with a sales representative. Whatever it may be, quality should be the crucial consideration when making your decision. For example, you are in the market for a new pair of tweezers. One pair costs \$2.00 while another costs \$25.00. You decide to take a chance with the \$2.00 pair. To your dismay, when faced with a simple task of removing a splinter from your finger, you find your recent purchase does not meet your expectations. The tips of the tweezers are blunted and don't meet, making it nearly impossible to remove the splinter. Had you opted for the higher quality pair, completing this task would have been much more efficient and painless. This exemplifies the old credo quote "you get what you pay for".

The Quality Difference

At your next instrument audit, look to see if you are buying for price or quality. Specifically, check your dressing pliers (a.k.a cotton pliers, college pick-ups or college pliers). Since precision dressing pliers are used for suture removal, retraction cord removal, placement of cotton pellets and other intra-oral procedures, it is crucial that they be a good quality plier. Keep in mind you need precision dressing pliers with some etching materials and with placement of some locally administered antibiotics. (check with manufacturer of LAA to determine if you need serrated or non-serrated).

Design Features

You have a choice of various dressing plier designs to perform specific procedures. For example, you can select beaks that have serrations to enhance a more secure gripping ability, or you may need beaks featuring smooth surfaces. Generally, these different surface designs cannot be used interchangeably. It is essential that any debris retained in the grooves of serrated beaks be thoroughly removed during the cleaning process prior to sterilization.



Non-serrated or smooth beaks



Considerations when buying your next dressing pliers should include factors such as a beak grasp to ensure consistent positive closure, a guide pin with a pin stop to prevent over compression, and a high quality hinge that will not corrode or separate. Dressing pliers that have a high polished finish are able to resist corrosion after repeated sterilization. However, it is important to remember that when mixing different metals in the sterilizer, harmful outcomes will occur to all the instruments. It is therefore important to make sure that the quality of the dressing pliers are compatible with your other stainless steel instruments in your cassettes or bags. Taking time to assess the quality of your instruments ensures efficiency and longevity, which supports the claim "it pays to spend a little more."



Guide pin with pin-stop prevents over compression

