



Saving time with technology

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In our daily practices, we count so many things — teeth are numbered, millimeters are counted, and enough appointments are scheduled to fill the day. **Of all of the things that we calculate, TIME may be one of the most important, clinically and financially.** Writer Charles Caleb Colton reflected on time: “*Wisdom walks before it, opportunity with it.*” So true. Time, used efficiently through technology, provides opportunities for both the dentist and the patient.

One of the most impressive time savers in my office is the 3-D cone beam scanner (Gendex GXCB-500 HD™). While the most compelling reason to implement 3-D is clinical, time is also an important factor. For example, I first need to determine if adequate bone is present to support an implant. A visual exam or even 2-D X-ray cannot provide the precise measurements of bone depth and width that I need.

One would suppose that gathering such information would require time-consuming research. Not so, with an in-office cone beam system. In less than a minute, I get a scan that shows whether I have enough bone to place an implant, or if a graft is needed first. With a double click of the mouse, I can then obtain a view that slices through the bone from buccal to lingual so that I can check for situations like undercuts that I would not be able to see in 2-D. The scan exposure is nine seconds, and the data takes about 20 seconds to reconstruct. Then I can go immediately to the planning phase.

Cone beam scan data is easily integrated into specialized implant planning programs. When I plan implants for referring dentists, Anatomage’s InVivoDental™ implant software lets me plan an individual implant in a few minutes. InVivoDental contains a library of different manufactur-

ers’ implants — such as Astra, Nobel, and Zimmer — so one can see the appearance of the actual implant. I also use the NobelGuide™, and scans are compatible with other applications such as SimPlant™, Keystone EasyGuide™, and Facilitate™.

That’s the beauty of 3-D. Not only am I more confident of the implant’s success, but it takes only 30 minutes to an hour to plan a large implant case, depending on the implant software. Plus, planning the case “at home” facilitates the flow in the office even more.

Technology has definitely made dentistry less invasive, as well as faster. With a cone beam scan, utilizing guided

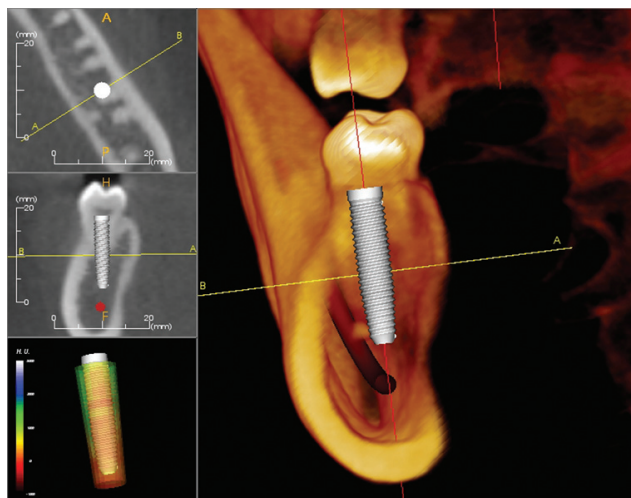
surgery techniques, I don’t have to make an incision to know what the bone looks like. Also, with my DEKA CO₂ laser I get tissue out of the way without the bleeding of an incision — resulting in an approximate five-minute placement for each implant. Thanks to the scan and the laser, there is nominal post-operative sensitivity, and patients report barely needing to take any pain meds.

Besides the benefits to the practitioner, time-saving technologies put the patient at ease, eliminate long, boring waits in the chair, and help avoid unnecessary additional appointments.

It’s amazing that an implant can be accomplished more quickly than a root canal, and this anxiety-reducer is especially important since I do not use IV sedation during the implant process.

Technology reduces the complications of implant surgery, improves success rates, and considerably reduces the preplanning process. A word to the wise: Keep time on your side and use technology to expand your practice and your profits. **DE**

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CBCB: Less time, less invasive procedures, fewer complications