



Color Method

Color is the foundation of the Zirc Color Method, a practice organizational system that arranges instruments into tubs color-coded for each procedure. These color-coded tray set-ups are said to keep instruments organized and accessible chairside, creating straightforward training and a simple sterilization process. The tubs also allow for easy access and organized restocking of materials. The Color Method system is designed to increase efficiency and productivity while protecting instruments from damage.

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Color-coding reduces interruptions chairside, increases efficiency

After implementing the Zirc Color Method, one clinician saw significant time savings in her practice. [by Jan Weaver]



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Dr. Tanya Brown was already sold on Zirc's colorful Mr. Thirsty isolation products and mouth mirrors when she decided to give the Zirc Color Method a try. As the name would suggest, the Color Method uses color to organize the procedural workflow in a dental practice. The system's color-coding scheme groups instruments and materials by procedure for efficiency and to save time.

The Color Method has now been in use for approximately 18 months at Dr. Brown's Cosmetic and Restorative Dentistry Practice in Chesapeake, Va. The practice has

made full use of the system's colorful anti-microbial resin trays, tubs, cassettes, and bur blocks, along with other identifiers, to streamline the daily work of their practice.

To get started, Dr. Brown consulted with a Zirc efficiency expert who analyzed the organizational needs of her practice. Once their needs were identified, the practice was able to get up and running quickly with the Color Method. "It took us just a day to take things apart and reorganize everything into the Color Method cassettes and tubs," she says.

Taking efficiency to the next level

Even for a practice as well organized as Dr. Brown's, the Color Method took its efficiency to the next level. "We were already pretty well organized, but [the Color Method] helped

fill in the missing links. We now have a consolidated set-up. We don't have to restock treatment rooms to be ready for the day," Dr. Brown says, adding that set-up is done the night before.

As the Color Method recommends, Dr. Brown's practice utilizes its sterilization center as the bulk storage area for restocking procedure materials into the trays and tubs. All instruments and materials flow through this central hub for reprocessing and restocking. The next day's procedure set-ups are grouped by color code and staged in racks in the sterilization center for easy retrieval.

Prior to the Color Method, Dr. Brown's biggest pain point was the time spent searching for materials and instruments during a procedure. "Now it's rare that we have to leave during a procedure to look for some-

thing," she said. The ability to stay chairside throughout a procedure has been the greatest benefit of the system, she said.

Dr. Brown said the color-coded trays and tubs work like portable operatory drawers. Rather than stocking the drawers in the operatory cabinets with instruments and materials, these items are organized by procedure into the Color Method tubs, which can easily be carried between sterilization and treatment.

A true time-saving method

Time savings by the practice since using the Color Method has been significant—a total of 30.4 hours per week, according to an independent time study conducted by Dr. Brown.

Dr. Brown's staff compared time taken before and after Color Method implementation in four different functional areas of the practice—the treatment room, central sterilization, at chairside, and inventory control.

Dr. Brown's staff calculated daily time savings per treatment room set-up was 22.8 minutes, and tear-down was 34.8 minutes, totaling almost an hour.

Between sterilization and ultrasonic cleaning, the practice saved 24.6 hours per week.

Additional time savings were realized chairside. Instances of leaving the room mid-procedure were reduced by 80 percent (from 10 instances to two) for total time savings of 2 hours. ●