

Keeping your handpieces in optimum condition

By Sarah Hendry

Maintaining your handpieces to ensure the bearings have their longest life possible can't be achieved merely by a "squirt of oil". It's the entire system that requires attention. I speak to a lot of dental nurses and review their daily techniques and I'm often surprised that the handpiece maintenance is not achieved to its full potential.

At First Dental, we've implemented a maintenance guide for highspeed handpieces as well as steps on lubricating contra angles and heads. This is an easy to follow guide, free to all First Dental clients. With our clients we are more than happy to go through their current maintenance system step by step, so as to obtain a thorough understanding of the surgery procedures.

First Dental believes not only in providing a quality repair to all high speeds, low speeds, scalers, couplings and most electrical lab handpieces (the majority of these experiencing a 24 hour turnaround), but also achieving a personal connection with our clients. Quite often our clients contact us wanting a clarification on handpiece care. With our vast technical repair knowledge, we can personally take a little time to explain what effect their maintenance or "lack of maintenance" has on their instruments.

We do recommend people follow the manufacturer's specifications for their handpiece care. However, when combining different brands of equipment, extra care and attention is warranted in the cleaning process. For example an "Assistina*" (a very popular automated cleaning and oiling system) is great for eliminating human error, yet if a KaVo handpiece is attached, a "double press" for 2 seconds each time and the use of Kavo oil is required.

We do understand that many surgeries have more than one particular model of handpiece. In this case, the genuine single

lubrication spray can with special attachment is practical. Keeping KaVo handpieces lubricated with KaVo oil, and NSK Handpieces with their designated G82, and so on for the other models, will help to ensure your investment will stand up to the test of time.

Every surgery is unique, some with intricacies as stated above, so an explanation of maintenance procedures on a personal level is necessary. However the basic outline to maintaining the entire system can be detailed in 3 stages.

Stage 1

All large equipment serviced and calibrated yearly (as a minimum).

This is best achieved by your manufacturers' service equipment technician. Water filters require replacement and lines purged (may require twice yearly depending on water supply). Compressor and autoclave serviced and calibrated to ensure the correct air pressure and temperature is reached for the programmed time.

Stage 2

Daily handpiece care - specific details are available in First Dental's maintenance guide.

- **Never** use ANY chemicals not specifically designed for dental handpieces! "Pine-O-Clean" disinfectant spray is fantastic for your bench tops, yet will have a disastrous result in your handpieces (this is based on a true finding);
- **Never** extend burrs in the chuck, run handpieces dry, run without a burr or after they've been dropped;
- **Never** use a warm handpiece straight from the autoclave or store them wet (complete the 30 min drying cycle). Doing so will minimise the life of your bearings;
- Following the correct lubrication techniques using adaptors designed for your model handpiece will ensure the oil is

achieving its designated purpose of reaching the head and protecting the bearing cage from the extremes of the autoclave; and

- Low speeds, where the heads can be detached, are best lubricated and autoclaved separately; this allows any debris to be freely "blown" out rather than just being moved from the shank and getting trapped in the head. This also minimises the chances of debris seizing the head to the shank.

Stage 3

Staff training and consistency

While it is necessary for one person to achieve the highest maintenance care for your handpieces, more than one is preferable - after all staff can fall ill or go on leave. Having another person "thrown into" handpiece care could dramatically reduce the life of the bearings in your drill.

Following the right maintenance information and consistency is the key to extending the life of your handpieces; genuine, aftermarket, steel or ceramic bearings will all break down the same way if the incorrect procedures are followed. First Dental's guide can be used for all models, giving simple and easy to follow instructions for everyone involved in handpiece maintenance.

If you would like to discuss your current maintenance system, we would be glad to go through it with you step by step. Together we should be able to maximise the life of your investments.

**Assistina is manufactured by W&H. Extra information and tips with Kavo H/P's using an Assistina, is available directly from Ivoclar.*

For more info on handpiece care, contact First Dental on 1800-086-430.