

The Fit 4 Prevention Mindset: 1) Maintaining Teeth for Life – A shared goal for patients and dental professionals

“We are treating patients, not teeth!” – And patients love positive motivation, as much as they hate the drill!

Keep the following principles top of mind, to get permanently Fit 4 Prevention:

- **Increase the focus on CARE:** Act early with preventative and minimally invasive approaches, to reduce the need for restorative treatments in the future.
- **Aim to become an ‘oral care coach,’ rather than a disease manager:** Look for every opportunity to engage your patients in a motivational dialogue. Help them realize that taking responsibility for their oral hygiene and nutrition will help them achieve their own life goals. Tell them you have a shared goal – to maintain their teeth for life!
- **Actively recommend prevention:** Keep on spreading the good news – dental diseases are 100% preventable. Patients are looking for your expert recommendation of products, services and oral hygiene techniques that can help them stay healthy. Make it easy for them.
- **Systematically assess risk-level and recall interval for all patients:** Put in place prevention, assessment and management systems for periodontitis, caries and dentine hypersensitivity. Explain to your patients about their particular risk-situation – and jointly agree on a recall date.
- **Remember, healthy patients need your coaching too:** Help them to protect 100% of their mouths – for lasting peace of mind.

Dental Wars – The Saga Continues. *Across all generations, we need to adjust the balance in favour of CARE:*

- **Generation Z (born after 2000)** – Unfortunately, the problem of childhood caries persists in certain risk groups. Take additional preventative measures whenever you see a child with risk-factors.
- **Generation X and Generation Y (Millennials)** – Some have left home, abandoned their dentist and let oral hygiene slip. The challenge is to keep them on the radar, keep them motivated and persuade at-risk patients to act before it’s too late.
- **“Baby Boomers” (born 1946–1964)** – As people have successfully maintained their teeth, ‘peak restoration’ has been pushed to a later age. “Baby Boomers” remain a “heavy metal” generation. You need to consider a patient’s future capacity for self-care, when planning any operative treatment in someone over 50.
- **The Greatest Generation (born 1945 and before)** – The population is aging rapidly across Europe and most people are now keeping their teeth into old age. However, chronic diseases, poly-pharmacy and resulting xerostomia (dry mouth) is causing a rapid increase in coronal and root caries.