

## Staying ahead of the game

Dr. Fred Peck - General Dentist, Cincinnati

Adding technological innovations is nothing new for Dr. Fred Peck. His Cincinnati practice is equipped with digital X-rays, lasers for diagnostics and treatment, computerized patient education and treatment planning, and for almost two years now 3M ESPE's Lava™ Chairside Oral Scanner C.O.S. digital replication platform.

Dr. Peck's motivation to add digital impression technology to his armamentarium was not at all complex.

"I didn't want to get behind," he explained.

### Finding the right fit

But staying up with the latest innovations requires some research, and Dr. Peck made sure he did his homework before adding the digital replication platform to his practice. The first part of the decision process involved ruling out full chairside CAD/CAM systems because Dr. Peck said he thought about it for a moment but realized staining and glazing chairside milled restorations was not something he had any interest in doing.

With a focus on digital systems, Dr. Peck evaluated Cadent's iTero and Sirona's CEREC AC along with the Lava C.O.S. His research involved talking with friends who had worked with the systems at dental schools, and his search finally zeroed in on the Lava C.O.S. because he liked the video impression acquisition technology it employed and the way the system can be used to send cases to any lab he wants to work with.

"One of the things I liked about what I purchased was it didn't matter what equipment they have in the lab," he said.



### Technological integration

Moving the system into the office was not a difficult process for Dr. Peck. He prepared his staff for the transition, and they responded positively, as have his patients.

For him personally, the transition has been just what he had hoped in that he has not had to adapt his preparations or his treatment plans to take the digital impressions into account. Being able to continue to practice the way he had before while using the system as often as possible was a big factor in his decision to invest in digital impression technology.

"I like the fact that it didn't change the way I can practice. I didn't want it to," he said while noting that in less than two years he has transitioned to digital impressions for just about every crown or bridge case he treats.

### Immediate advantages

In fact, the Lava C.O.S. has even allowed him to provide treatment to some patients who he could not easily treat without it. With some patients who presented a severe gag reflex, he could not take an accurate physical impression, but has been able to capture their intraoral anatomy digitally to provide treatment such as crowns and diagnostic models. Previously, he had to work with an oral surgeon to sedate those patients to take a physical impression, so the digital process is easier for everyone involved.

The results he is getting back from his lab have also improved since he switched to digital impressions. Crowns produced from the digital scans are seating better, and he described their occlusal accuracy as "phenomenal." He's even timed himself taking a digital impression and a physical impression to compare them, and for a single crown he saves more than two minutes

by going digital. Those time savings only grow when he uses the C.O.S. system for larger cases because he no longer has to take repeat impressions to avoid air bubbles and other issues.

While those benefits make his work easier, the bottom line of adding technology like this is to improve things for the patients. Dr. Peck said not only do his existing patients know and appreciate the fact that he invests in new technologies to improve their dental experience, but promoting his practices' technological investments also helps attract new patients.

"I do get a lot of patients who prior to becoming new patients look at my credentials and look at the technologies I use in the office, and they come in to the office with a level of trust that I don't think they would have had otherwise," he said.

### Looking ahead

For the time being, Dr. Peck said he is very happy with his decision to move to a digital impression environment. However, he knows technologies will continue to evolve and improve, and he plans to stay on top of things to be ready when something new is proven both clinically and economically.

Whether it's CAD/CAM with chairside milling or just in-office digital replication systems, he fully expects a more digital form of dentistry to be the norm while he is still practicing. Just like with lasers, which have become more widely used as they have become more affordable, Dr. Peck said even a dentist like him who has little interest in performing lab processes chairside could make use of a mill if the price were right.

"I don't think I would use it all the time, but there might be times when it would be useful for a patient," he said. "I wouldn't feel bad if a piece of technology collects dust for a day or a week if it's not that much money. But for \$100,000, you want to be using that thing every day."



While the technology has not changed the way he preps or diagnoses patients, adding the Lava Chairside Oral Scanner C.O.S. to his practice has allowed Dr. Peck to treat patients who gag during physical impressions and also improved the fit of the restorations he receives back from his lab.

