



5

Reasons

Why You Should Add
Pediatric Laser Dentistry
to your Practice

Introduction

Lasers in medicine are nothing new. Back in the late '80s and the early '90s, general surgeons, ophthalmologists and other physicians learned that lasers allowed them to provide patients with a higher standard of care. For a multitude of reasons, lasers were clearly a better tool for many procedures. Since then, lasers have become irreplaceable for many procedures in ophthalmology, gynecology, ENT, general surgery, dermatology, cosmetic surgery and other medical specialties, and are standard of care in tens of thousands of clinics and hospitals.

The first dental lasers were introduced about the same time, and now have a more than 25-year track record of clinical success. Today's dental lasers are extremely effective instruments for the treatment of a variety of dental applications – both hard-tissue and soft-tissue. They allow dentists to provide minimally invasive dentistry with significantly less pain and anxiety for the patient. Lasers can help minimize bleeding and promote faster healing.

In the case of the pediatric patient, the advantages of laser dentistry can be even more profound than that of the general population. Adults may be fearful and anxious, but they are usually not screaming or throwing tantrums or otherwise resisting with all their physical and vocal might. For the pediatric patient, laser dentistry provides a much gentler, less stressful dental experience. In most cases, the child needn't even experience a shot or a drill – and this in itself has major implications for the patient, the parents or guardians, and the dental team.

By integrating laser dentistry into your pediatric practice, you offer a higher-caliber dental experience with kid-friendly technology that moms appreciate and talk about with other moms. Here are five compelling reasons why you should consider adding laser dentistry to your pediatric practice:

For the pediatric patient, laser dentistry provides a much gentler, less stressful dental experience.



Offer your patients state-of-the-art, minimally invasive dental care

Dental lasers allow you to provide state-of-the-art, minimally-invasive dental care. For both hard-tissue and soft-tissue applications, laser offers significant advantages for the pediatric patient. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recognizes the use of lasers as an alternative and complementary method of providing soft and hard-tissue dental procedures for infants, children, adolescents, and persons with special health care needs¹.

Benefits of Laser Dentistry for Pediatric Patients

Advantages of Laser Dentistry for Hard-Tissue (teeth & bone)

- Little to no local anesthesia is required for restorative tooth preparation
- Removes tooth decay with minimal involvement of surrounding tooth structure, conserving healthy tooth structure
- Eliminates the noise and vibratory effects of the conventional high-speed drill allowing tooth preparations to be comfortable and less anxiety provoking for children and adolescents
- Reduces pain and discomfort during dental procedures

Advantages of Laser Dentistry for Soft-Tissue (gums, cheeks, frenum, tongue, soft palate)

- Less bleeding because laser performs hemostasis as it operates; eliminating the need for sutures in most cases
- Minimal involvement of adjacent tissue
- Wound healing can occur more rapidly
- Less post-operative discomfort
- Reduced need for analgesics
- Lasers exhibit decontaminating and bactericidal properties on tissues, requiring less prescribing of antibiotics post-operatively
- Lasers can provide relief from the pain and inflammation associated with aphthous ulcers and herpetic lesions without pharmacological intervention
- Little to no local anesthesia is required for most soft-tissue treatments

Advantages of Laser Dentistry for Patient Emotional Well-Being

- It is postulated that laser dentistry helps reduce fear and anxiety in pediatric patients because of the elimination of the need for shots and the elimination of the use of the dental drill.
- It is also postulated that by eliminating the fear and anxiety associated with childhood dental visits, laser dentistry may help foster a healthier lifelong mindset about oral health.





Increase your professional satisfaction

Laser dentistry is not as simple as just buying a laser and putting it in your practice. Laser dentistry requires additional didactic and experiential education and training on the use of lasers before applying laser technology on pediatric dental patients. Practicing pediatric laser dentistry requires modifications in clinical technique and the more knowledge and skills you acquire, the more you can offer to your pediatric patients.

For many dentists, learning laser dentistry ignites an entirely new outlook and new enthusiasm for dentistry...



Because today's lasers are so sophisticated, and because there is a large and ever-growing body of clinical research about laser efficacy, most dentists find learning laser dentistry personally and professionally rewarding. As with any other specialty training, there is a wide-variety of course offerings that can take you from a new user, all the way to mastery of advanced laser techniques. For many dentists, learning laser dentistry ignites an entirely new outlook and new enthusiasm for dentistry and this often translates to a renewed passion for advancing the success of the dental practice.

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Kids need it. Moms want it.

Because adding pediatric laser dentistry to your practice is an investment – in both equipment and training – it is important to be aware of trends related to pediatric dentistry in order to understand how adding laser dentistry can benefit your practice. No practice will be successful without patients, and there is a growing pediatric patient base and there is a shortage of dentists skilled in treating children. This combination of factors makes it increasingly attractive to invest in laser technology:



- The pediatric population in the US is increasing at an annual rate of 3%²
- Tooth decay has become epidemic among our youngest children. Early childhood caries (ECC) is now the most common chronic early childhood disease in the United States and five-times more common than asthma.³
- Among children 2 to 20 years of age, the rate of dental visits is increasing.³
- More children are covered by dental insurance. The ADA projected approximately 8.7 million children could gain extensive dental coverage through the Affordable Care Act by 2018. For children, the expansion will be almost evenly split among Medicaid (3.2 million), health insurance exchanges or marketplaces (3 million) and employer sponsored insurance (2.5 million)⁴. Even if you do not accept Medicaid patients, the growth in covered children is significant. Lack of dental insurance has been shown to be a compelling reason that families do not seek dental care for children³.
- There is a shortage of dentists skilled in treating children³. According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentists in its 2014 report, "The State of Little Teeth," there are not currently enough pediatric dentists to serve the entire population of young children.

This combination of factors: growing pediatric population, increasing tooth decay, increasing dental visits, and more children covered by dental insurance, mean that the dentist skilled in treating children has greater opportunity than ever before.

Moms have always wanted the best for their children, before, during and after treatment.

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Differentiate your pediatric practice

Adding laser dentistry differentiates your pediatric practice. Pediatric laser dentistry is far gentler and less traumatic for children and much less invasive than conventional dental techniques. When you start delivering pediatric dentistry with less shots, less fear, and far less stress and anxiety for the patient, word gets around. But people don't know what they don't know! By using laser dentistry in your marketing and social media, you can attract new patients.

Moms have a choice, and they continually choose the best for their children. By integrating pediatric laser dentistry into your practice, you offer a higher-caliber dental experience with kid-friendly technology that moms appreciate and talk about with other moms.



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Generate a powerful return on investment for your practice

The addition of laser technology to your dental practice is an investment that can pay off handsomely. The actual ROI will vary depending upon your practice volume and your procedure mix and production. There is vast opportunity for business improvement in the following areas:

- **Addition of new procedures:** By adding laser dentistry to your practice, you can generate additional revenue by performing procedures that were not previously performed at your practice. For the pediatric practice typical procedures added are: infant and child frenectomy, treatment of aphthous ulcers and herpetic lesions, vital pulpotomy, apicoectomy, operculectomy, gingivectomy, extractions, soft-tissue biopsy, periodontal laser therapy (for special needs patients).
- **Timing savings and greater efficiency with existing procedures:** Because laser dentistry is virtually pain-free, no local anesthesia is required for most class I – V fillings or other restorative preparations. This provides significant time-savings and the opportunity to perform more procedures in less time, or more procedures during the same appointment.
- **New Patients gained by referral:** By differentiating your practice with a high-caliber dental experience and kid-friendly technology, there is significant opportunity to gain new patients via word of mouth referrals and online review.



Conclusion

Lasers in medicine – including dentistry – have advanced significantly over the past 25 years, and there is a growing body of evidence that supports the use of dental lasers as superior tools for many procedures.

In the case of the pediatric patient, the advantages of laser dentistry can be even more advantageous than that of the general population. For the pediatric patient, laser dentistry provides a much gentler, less stressful dental experience – and this is a major shift in the delivery of dental care which patients (and their parents) respond positively to. There is a growing pediatric patient base and a growing need for pediatric dental care.



By integrating laser dentistry into your pediatric practice, you offer a higher-caliber dental experience with kid-friendly technology that parents appreciate and talk about...

Ready to get started?

Let our laser experts guide you and your team through how laser technology benefits your practice and your patients.

Call 888.424.6527 to have your questions answered by your BIOLASE Account Manager.

By integrating laser dentistry into your pediatric practice, you offer a higher-caliber dental experience with kid-friendly technology that parents appreciate and talk about with other parents. Pediatric laser dentistry provides a return on investment for the dental practice that is driven by three main factors:

- The addition of new procedures that were not previously performed at the practice
- Time and efficiency gains for procedures your practice is already providing
- New patients gained via referrals

When you look objectively at all the positive factors about pediatric laser dentistry, the facts are compelling. When you combine these facts with the personal and professional satisfaction of delivering a higher standard of care in a far gentler manner, the reasons for adding pediatric dentistry to your practice become quite persuasive.



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