

# A revolutionary approach to creating ideal patients

by David Little, DDS

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**W**hat makes an ideal patient? Ideal patients make and keep regular appointments, say “yes” to your recommended treatment, are happy to be in your chair, don’t move or compromise the procedure, heal nicely, and brag about how great you are.

Ideal patients are your best advocates — they spread the word to their friends and family and help grow your business. Ideal patients make you a better clinician, a better service provider, and a better business owner. How many ideal patients do you have in your practice?

Unfortunately, the concept of the ideal patient is challenged by the human condition of *anxiety*. Throughout the history of dentistry, fear and anxiety have plagued the patient experience. An anxious mind avoids dental treatment. An anxious body resists medicaments and compro-

mises treatment efficacy and efficiency. Anxious patients create a stressful environment, which in turn creates anxiety for the dentist and team.

Simply stated, anxious patients are not ideal patients and are bad for your business. In fact, they typically have negative experiences, disrupt and compromise the procedure, and are not a good referral source for your dental business.

## **The physiology of anxiety**

Most dental professionals are familiar with the challenge of working on anxious patients but few understand the neurology and physiology of anxiety. Anxiety is a physiological state characterized by cognitive, somatic, emotional, and behavioral components. These components combine to create feelings of fear, apprehension, and worry.

## A revolutionary approach to creating ideal patients

Anxiety is often accompanied by physical sensations such as heart palpitations, nausea, muscle tension, dry mouth, and irritability. Anxious patients sweat, startle, gag, swallow excessively, and complain. They feel threatened as they try to cope with what they perceive as a fearful situation.

Anxiety is as common an emotion as fear, anger, sadness, and happiness, and it has an important function in relation to human survival. Fear and anxiety are elicited by the stimulus of a threat, real or perceived. In the case of dentistry, the perception of a threat is typically predicated on a historical experience or the fear of the unknown.

An anxious response begins when a stressor is perceived by the amygdala, which contacts an array of brain regions to activate the fight-or-flight system. The fight-or-flight response uses the sympathetic nervous system and the adrenal-cortical system to alert the body to speed up, tense up, become hypervigilant, and take action. The sympathetic nervous system triggers the release of epinephrine (adrenaline) and norepinephrine (noradrenaline) from the adrenal medulla into the blood stream. These hormones increase heart rate and blood pressure.

In parallel, the hypothalamus releases corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF) into the pituitary gland, triggering the release of the adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH). ACTH travels through the blood stream to the adrenal cortex, where it initiates the release of numerous hormones that ready the body to respond to a threat.

Once the fight-or-flight response is activated, the only way for a patient to relax without assistance is to remove the stimulus and let time pass. An anxious dental patient is physically programmed to challenge the procedure as an act of survival.

### The NuCalm™ solution

NuCalm is a new technology that is revolutionizing the patient experience. This patent-pending technology creates ideal patients by naturally interrupting an anxious response and invoking full-body relaxation. This technology uses the body's own communication mechanisms for preparing the body for sleep, making a patient feel exactly the way they feel moments before they fall asleep.

Patients can respond to voice commands, but are typically unable to have an anxious response because they are experiencing the first stage of sleep. Patients using this solution exhibit deep breathing, muscle relaxation in the head, neck, and jaw, reduced salivary flow, reduced tongue movement, reduced gag reflexes, and a relaxed body posture.

It uniquely creates deep relaxation without using narcotics or controlled substances, causes no side effects, and requires no recuperative time or supervision. Imag-

ine working on a still patient that has not been rendered chemically unconscious and cognitively impaired, but is simply relaxing as if they were about to fall asleep. You get to focus exclusively on your dentistry while your patient enjoys a new phenomenon — relaxing in the dental chair.

### Natural relaxation therapy

This system is a natural relaxation therapy that is easy for patients and dental professionals to use. In four simple steps, NuCalm is administered and patients begin relaxing within five minutes. It is as simple to use as chewing some vitamins, using an electrical stimulation device, listening to an MP3 player, and wearing sunglasses.

The most surprising thing is that it works on almost every patient. There are no cognitive or physical impairments, and just as with sleep, you can't be allergic or become addicted. Patients can come and go on their own and dental professionals don't have to worry about the risks associated with being a part-time anesthesiologist. The patient's posttreatment experience is a feeling of rejuvenation and relief due to the neuromuscular release and functional nervous system homeostasis.

I have been using NuCalm in my practice since 2009. Today, every patient that comes into my restorative operatories uses NuCalm and many request it for their hygiene appointments. It has created incredible excitement in our practice, and has improved my production while reducing my stress.

For the first time in years, I'm not intimidated to look at the next day's schedule because I know that my most anxious patients will be relaxed.

This great solution eliminates the transference of anxiety and negativity from patients to dentists and team members, thereby creating a relaxed work environment for everyone. My clinical team no longer has to serve as chairside therapists.

At the end of the day, my team feels more productive and less stressed. I leave every day feeling energized and happy to be providing an exceptional service to all of my patients. I have become passionate about dentistry again, and I know I am doing my very best for my patients. NuCalm not only has created an ideal patient base, it has also made me an ideal dentist. **DE**

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