



# Cape CARES

## Central American Relief Efforts

### Dental Protocol

#### Personnel required/suggested:

- Dentist: a team of two or more is preferable  
Hygienist: at least one; two would be ideal  
Assistant: at least one trained person and a second helper  
Translator: an individual who is also able to help with dental assisting

#### Personal Safety:

- 1) Updated emergency crash box
- 2) A physician member on the team
- 3) Briefing by team leader about conditions and necessary preventive pre-medications. Hep B and tetanus booster are recommended for all personnel including dental team.
- 4) All persons working with patients or instruments will be provided with necessary universal precautions (ie gloves, masks, safety glasses and hand sanitizer).
- 5) Participating dentists are responsible for educating all participants in safe operating procedures and prevention of accidental punctures and needle sticks.

#### Equipment:

- 1) We recommend that each dentist take his or her own dental instruments to augment Cape Cares supplies.
- 2) Los Encinitos has a complete facility for restorative dentistry as well as extractions. Someone familiar with the set up and maintenance of this equipment should be present if it is to be used. The electricity in Los Encinitos is somewhat primitive. The grounding as well as the grounding from the portable generators is questionable. Use Caution - don't stand in wet areas when handling electrical items.
- 3) San Marcos does not have electricity. To accomplish restorative work, a generator can be made available as well as some portable equipment including a unit, vacuum system, and a compressor. If restorative works is planned for this site, you must request these items well in advance of the trip. Someone familiar with the operation of this equipment should be contacted for more specific information on its operation and use.
- 4) If restorative work is planned, the dentist should bring his or her own hand-pieces, burs, and restorative materials.
- 5) Each site should have an inventory of needles, gloves, anesthetics, cotton, 2x2's, and masks. It might be wise to bring a small quantity of these items.
- 6) When storing equipment and supplies, be aware that it might be a year or more before the next team arrives. Pack all equipment securely. Generator tanks should be drained, suction cleaned, and generators run dry. Some believe that Bounce fabric softener sheets repel rodents. If nothing else, they make the boxes smell fresh when opened.



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### **Dental Protocol (continued)**

#### **Inventory:**

In order for the next group to know what is on site, you need to take a detailed inventory at the end of your visit. This should include quantities, sizes and expiration dates of medicines and anesthetics. Keep a copy for your records and give a copy to the group leader.

#### **Sterilization:**

An autoclave is available at Los Encinitos. It should be used. Boiling and high-level disinfection are all that is available in San Marcos. The propane stove and pressure cooker should be used for a minimum of 20 minutes. If the pressure cooker is not available, a 20 min boil will have to suffice. Glutaraldehyde or 10% Chlorox solution can be used for a presoak after a thorough hand scrubbing of the used instruments.

#### **Treatment:**

Make an assessment each day to ensure that people with acute problems are seen first.

Our Honduran patients have no access to follow-up dental care other than our visits every 3-4 months. Treatment that carries a high risk of future complications, such as deep restorations, pulp caps, and third molar surgery, should be thoughtfully evaluated before undertaking. A painful abscess or case of continued bleeding post treatment could have a very negative effect on our credibility as caring healers

Children should be given priority for restorative procedures.

#### **Drugs:**

Patients will expect post-op drugs. Experience tells us that less is often best. Administer drugs only when necessary.

#### **Prevention:**

This may be the most important contribution we make to these patients. Oral hygiene instruction should be offered. When possible, this can include school visits.

Where staffing and time allow, scaling and prophylaxis should be part of the treatment offerings.

Fluoride tables should be provided where there is a responsible person to administer them. Establish a relationship with a responsible person (eg teacher, priest) to create a fluoride program in a community. A responsible local person managing a fluoride tablet distribution system, must understand the risk of accidental and possible fatal overdose of the medication. During our visits, fluoride brush-ins and fluoride treatments can be provided.