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Editorial

A Prevention Recommendation, No Contraindications. Pending A Vaccine, Protect Against Viruses and Bacteria -

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There is consensus, that prevention is more necessary than cure, but there appears to be little reward for acts of prevention.

Before 1847, doctors visiting patients in obstetric clinics, moved from one bed to another, without washing their hands. A Hungarian physician, Ignác Fülöp Semmelweis, described as the “savior of mothers”, recognized that the high incidence of puerperal fever could be drastically reduced by hand disinfection.

Dental caries in children continues to be the single most common chronic disease of childhood, although the WHO has long issued international indications to promote children health and the prevention of oral disease. Caries in children aged 2-5 years is increasing by 15.2%, from a recently conducted study in Milan, Italy. The oral cavity hosts a microbial biofilm composed of bacteria, including a viral component. Our patients, as never before, are able to understand the ferocity and pathogenicity of viruses and bacteria. This must inspire the clinician to a continuous commitment for patient re-motivation, unequivocally the most relevant factor influencing the success of any dental treatment.

A dedicated dentist educates patients to mechanically remove biofilm. Mouthwash rinsing is ineffective for adhesive microbial plaque. When we began to successfully place dental implants, the entire surgical team, adopted a strict protocol, provided by Branemark, including an intra-oral pre-operative chlorhexidine “scrub”.

The World Health Organization, monitoring the global situation, continuously updates the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19. Currently, the major problem, both in the United States and in many other nations of the world, is to be able to contain the contagions, in strong increase, especially in case of failure to respect the social

distance or not wearing the surgical mask, in case of crowds and mass gatherings. In addition to maintaining adequate personal protective equipment, we should also try to provide etiological therapy: namely, try to disinfect the oral cavity, which is one of the main sources of the Covid 19 infection.

Washing and sanitizing hands frequently are important to prevent spreading the virus to the eyes, nose or mouth. An additional preventive action could be recommended: a vigorous disinfection of the oral cavity, associated with a gentle cleansing of nostrils and eyes.

A recent study, using 30 second, 0.12% chlorhexidine rinse produces an immunity from Covid-19 infection for 2 hours. Prolonging the time of immunity from Covid-19 contagion, in people currently in a healthy condition, would certainly be a goal of global interest. Using 0.12% chlorhexidine also for gargling and intraoral scrubbing of teeth, gingiva and mucous membranes may be useful. The effectiveness of this a protocol has not been verified. The possible benefits to oral tissues, as well as to the general health of the subjects included in a recommended research project, represent a further significant value and could be a secondary aim of the study. The slight absence of side effects of such a protocol, combined with very low economic costs, are positive and favorable factors.

Until a vaccine is available, definitively resolving this worldwide emergency, simple oral hygiene tips appear to be absolutely proper and correct. The take home message is to educate the world population to a mechanical removal of biofilm. The use of chlorhexidine or any other chemical, antiseptic or antimicrobial agent, should be used not continuously and for limited periods. An effective detergent action can also be obtained with gauze and saline solution, if the objective is to remove the biofilm from the hard surfaces of the oral cavity.