Biofilm management is a principal goal of preventive and nonsurgical periodontal therapy. As part of maintaining optimal oral health, biofilm management requires daily patient self-care in combination with routine professional care for biofilm removal. Traditional methods of subgingival biofilm management included hand and ultrasonic instrumentation, and supragingival biofilm removal focused on various polishing techniques. More recent innovations have focused on subgingival air polishing for the removal of biofilm from root surfaces with a glycine-based powder. As oral health care professionals we must also stay up to date with biofilm removal products that best meet each patient’s needs.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the traditional methods of professional biofilm removal: hand and/or ultrasonic instrumentation, power polishing, and air polishing
- Explain the importance of professional subgingival biofilm removal from root surfaces as a routine part of nonsurgical periodontal therapy
- Compare and contrast conventional supragingival air polishing with subgingival air polishing
- Explain the benefits to a patient when supra- and subgingival biofilm removal is incorporated into the treatment plan
- Identify and recommend self-care devices for daily biofilm removal

CLINICIAN

JENNIFER B. HARMON, RDH, MS. is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Comprehensive Oral Health at the Adams School of Dentistry at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she has taught for six years. As a triple Tar Heel, she has received her Bachelor of Arts in Exercise and Sport Science, Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene, and Master of Science in Dental Hygiene Education. She teaches both dental hygiene and dental students, and currently serves as clinic director for first-year dental hygiene students and directs several courses including dental anatomy and clinical theory.

Harmon serves on the advisory board for the National Center for Dental Hygiene Research & Practice and served as the President of the North Carolina Dental Hygienists’ Association. She is an active member of the American Dental Hygienists’ Association, American Dental Education Association, and Sigma Phi Alpha. In addition to these leadership roles, she is a strong advocate for oral health and overall wellness and enjoys speaking nationally for Dental Hygiene Academy.

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