Interim Protocol for Preventive Dental Care During COVID-19 in Public Health Settings: Reducing Aerosols and Educating Patients

**Recommendations for educating patients:**

- Explain selective polishing and the causes of stains. Counsel patients with tobacco stain and refer to CA Smoker’s Helpline: [https://www.nobutts.org/](https://www.nobutts.org/).
- Communicate the changes in the procedures to reduce aerosols.
- Discuss the role of an antimicrobial rinse prior to a procedure.
- Encourage healthy habits including daily flossing and brushing 2x day for 2 minutes with a fluoride toothpaste and healthy diet.

### Healthy or Maintained Patients

**Plaque Removal**

- **Light Plaque**
  - Wipe teeth, gums, and vestibules with gauze
- **Heavy Plaque**
  - Scale & brush patient’s teeth with a toothbrush dipped in an antimicrobial agent. Other aids can be used such as a rubber tip, proxy brush, or end tuft brush and floss.

**Stain Removal**

- **No**
  - Educate patient, document in chart, and address at next appointment
- **Yes**
  - In addition to the above, scale & toothbrush. Counsel on cause of stain. Exercise professional judgment if selective polishing is needed.

**Preventive Care**

- Fluoride Varnish
- GI Sealants
- Silver Diamine Fluoride (SDF)

**Toothbrushing**

- Use toothbrush to clean pits and fissures; cotton tip and gauze to dry tooth surface instead of air/water syringe. Utilize glass ionomer (GI) sealant.

**Note:** Avoid or limit polishing on patients presenting with active gingival inflammation; this may exaggerate or worsen chances of bacteremia.