

DENTAL HYGIENE TODAY

Essential Oils in Dentistry

Cherise McCrea, RDH, discusses how natural products help perio patients.

Q: Why use natural products for periodontal care?

A. Today's patients are more health-conscious and desire products with pure and natural ingredients. With the overwhelming variety of patient homecare products, finding those that are both truly natural and effective can be a frustrating task. In my personal life, I also look for more natural ingredients in the products I use, so as a dental hygienist, I feel vested in finding healthier products to recommend to my patients. When I discovered Dental Herb Company almost 5 years ago, I knew that my long search was over. I finally found a highly effective, truly natural oral care product line that I am proud to offer. Whether it's used for localized inflammation, generalized gingivitis, periodontal disease, or prevention for a healthy mouth, Dental Herb Company has the perfect product for most of my patients.

Q: What do you look for in a periodontal rinse?

A. Like many dental professionals, I often recommend a rinse for my periodontal patients, but their pronounced side effects, harsh ingredients, and lack of compliance with most traditional products often left me wondering if it was even worth it. Chlorhexidine used to be my go-to choice, but the staining it caused was a big issue. During the morning review of my schedule, I would identify each patient that was on a chlorhexidine protocol, and, mentally, the extra time it would take to complete their cleaning would throw my whole day off. Additionally, the 2-week limitation of chlorhexidine, due to its harsh chemicals, was a big concern. Other options I considered using were the popular, traditional OTC mouthwashes, but unfortunately, most contain alcohol and a plethora of artificial chemicals. Is there a natural perio rinse with proven



Cherise McCrea,
RDH

efficacy that patients will want to use? Yes, there is. It's called Tooth & Gums Tonic.

Q: What is the history behind Tooth & Gums Tonic?

A. After trying samples from Dental Herb Company and doing a deep dive into its history, Tooth & Gums Tonic became my go-to rinse. This powerful, antimicrobial mouthwash checks all the boxes. It's made with pure essential oils, it's alcohol-free and non-staining, it can be used long-term, and patients love it. It was 1996 when Dental Herb Company, founded by Dr. Bernard Schechter, arrived on the scene. He was a successful dentist with an extensive background in therapeutic herbology and microbiology. Dr. Schechter fully understood the damage pathogenic bacteria can do to periodontal tissues. He spent almost 30 years studying, formulating, and testing his products on his own patients with amazing results. He knew that proper combinations of pure essential oils increase the benefits of each to create a multifaceted compound with superior effects.¹ Dr. Schechter also knew that microorganisms do not form a resistance to pure essential oils the way they can with antibiotics,² so essential oil formulations can be effectively used long-term. Additionally, they penetrate the oral mucosa, accounting for their high degree of substantivity and long-lasting effects with very low dosage concentrations.³ Tooth & Gums Tonic, the flagship product of Dental Herb Company, is not only clinically proven but has also been used in dentistry for more than 25 years, and my patients love it.

Q: Essential oils are gaining in popularity. What is their significance in dentistry?

A. Essential oils have an extensive history of research and success in dentistry. Eugenol, thymol, and carvacrol have been widely used for root canals, temporary fillings and cements, periodontal therapy, stomatitis, and alveolar abscesses.^{2,3} Periodontal therapies seem to have benefited the most from essential oils. Biofilms are difficult to eliminate with standard antimicrobial treatments due to their high antibiotic resistance relative to free-living cells. Antimicrobial essential oils, such as cinnamon and red thyme, can eradicate bacteria within biofilms with higher efficiency than certain important antibiotics, making them interesting candidates for the treatment of biofilms.⁴ Seeing the impact essential oils can have on oral care, it confirmed my decision to recommend Dental Herb Company products for my patients.

Q: Which essential oils and herbs are in Dental Herb Company products, and why?

A. Dental Herb Company is proud of its ingredients. I appreciate that what you see on the label is exactly what is in the product. The pure essential oils and herbs in its formula were chosen because they are known to reduce harmful oral bacteria and microbes, promote healthy gums, and soothe inflammation. The key ingredients in Dental Herb products are cinnamon bark, peppermint, eucalyptus, red thyme, gotu kola, echinacea, and lavender. Cinnamon bark is a powerful antimicrobial and astringent to help contract and strengthen the oral tissue. It reduces inflammation and irritation as well as creates a protective barrier against infection. Peppermint, also a powerful antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory, offers protection against infection. It is soothing as well as stimulating to blood circulation. Eucalyptus is antimicrobial and antiseptic to protect against mouth ulcers and infection. It is also stimulating to boost circulation and speed up the healing process. Red thyme is antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, and stimulating, all which helps treat oral inflammation and infection. Gotu kola is an anti-inflammatory herb. It has been shown to increase effective collagen and is used in wound healing.⁵ Echinacea has antiviral, antibacterial, and anti-cytotoxic effects.⁶ Lastly, lavender is included because it is a very soothing essential oil. It helps provide relief but also has antimicrobial, antiseptic, and aromatic benefits.

Q: What other oral care products benefit from these powerful essential oils?

A. In addition to Tooth & Gums Tonic rinse, Dental Herb Company has a complete line of all-natural essential oil oral care products, including Tooth & Gums Essentials toothpaste, Under the Gums Irrigant (a concentrate for use with water irrigators or ultrasonics), PerioSpot therapy gel, and a breath spray called Spritz. The natural ingredients in the Dental Herb Company formula provide an ideal solution for our patients. From the most demanding periodontal patients who need a powerful antimicrobial to healthy patients who desire something natural, these products meet their needs. I don't just use these products for my perio patients—they are also great for post-procedure care like extractions, surgeries, and restorations where the gingiva is irritated. I love using them

and patients love me for providing them.

For more information and free samples, call **Dental Herb Company** at **(800) 747-4372** or visit the website dentalherb.com.

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Ms. McCreia is a clinical educator for Dental Herb Company. She presents live online webinars for dental offices and their teams about the oral-systemic link and the many benefits of providing natural antimicrobial therapy.

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