
***Interview
Skills
& Facts***

***For the
Dental
Spokesperson***

INTERPLAK[®]

Dear Doctor:

Now is a unique time to raise the public's dental health awareness.

For over two years, TV and magazine ads for a variety of products have tried their best to make Americans worry about gum disease. Previously unfamiliar terms like "gingivitis" and "tartar" have become part of our nation's consciousness.

Regrettably, these ads have been heavy on product claims and light on dental health information. Worse yet, some of the product claims are misleading, incomplete, or overstated.

But therein lies the opportunity. The public is looking for dental authorities to: 1) better inform them about the gum disease controversy, and 2) clarify dental health product claims. And numerous surveys have shown that *local dentists* are the most common and trusted source of dental health information.

The Oral Care Division of Bausch & Lomb has created the Local Spokesperson Program to help the local dentist get before his or her community to discuss current dental health issues. Our reason for sponsoring dental health discussions is simple: a public educated to the specific health problems of plaque and periodontitis will be interested in the INTERPLAK® device.

We have listened to, and worked very closely with, dentists since the introduction of the INTERPLAK instrument. As a result, we've produced an effective device that has earned the high regard of the dental profession:

1) Since 1985, over 30,000 dental offices and 47,000 dentists have purchased at least one INTERPLAK device.

2) Approximately 50% of consumers purchasing an INTERPLAK instrument did so at the recommendation of their dentist.

3) Eighteen months after they purchased an INTERPLAK instrument, 94% of owners still use the device regularly.

Clinical studies show us that the INTERPLAK device is effective; but it is *dentists* who tell us that the INTERPLAK instrument produces high compliance levels among users historically deficient in home care.

We look forward to helping you create an atmosphere of interest and education for dental care issues.

Regards,



John M. Trenary, President
Oral Care Division
Bausch & Lomb

The Need:

A "Dentally" Aware Public

- 90% of all Americans will experience gum disease.
- Half of the U.S. population does not visit the dentist during the year. Most of those who do not visit the dentist regularly say they simply feel no need to go.
- Many people who *do* regularly see a dentist nevertheless have a compliance problem due to either home care neglect or inability to thoroughly remove plaque on a daily basis.

If preventive dental care is our goal, there is obviously a need for more informative, active communication between the dental profession and the public.

The Means:

Media Contacts

Both electronic and print media offer the possibility of thousands, even millions of people being exposed to a single dental health interview. Electronic media offer access to people who would normally not seek out dental information, but become a captive audience to radio or TV programs played in the comfort of their own homes. Many other consumers look to newspapers or magazines for credible, detailed discussion of health issues.

Researching Media Outlets

Look Before You Speak

Before you can develop your dental health message, you first have to answer two questions: 1) who is going to hear the message? and 2) how will it be presented to them?

To answer both of these questions, you must decide which media outlets would be most appropriate for your message. For example: do your local papers have regular health columns or a weekly health section? Does the paper have a health editor, or are health issues covered by the *Lifestyles*/*"Women's Section"* editor?.

Previewing For Specifics

People working in media are chronically short on time. They are always juggling several different stories with brutal deadlines. **DO NOT WASTE THEIR TIME**, or they will not listen to, or use, your information. Do as much research and preparation as possible before attempting to make any media contacts.

Go to the library and make a list of media outlets that might be interested in your dental health information. Read back issues of unfamiliar magazines that are likely prospects for your story. Ask the librarian for the reference books that list local magazines, newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and editorial personnel. Check the media listings by geographical breakdown.

Potential broadcast outlets include:

- local radio talk shows
- local television talk shows
- local radio and television news programs
- local "community affairs broadcasting"

Do not overlook public radio or public television.

Study the media on your list. How do they treat stories on similar issues? How do they handle health stories?

For each particular medium, you're actually researching two things: the interviewer (writer/editor) and his or her audience. To retain a large and interested audience, the interviewer must interpret the needs and interests of his or her audience and create an attitude that reflects those interests. Investigate the ages, occupations, education levels, health knowledge, and socioeconomic makeup of the audience. Ask yourself: why is this audience tuning in to this show or reading this article?

The Key: Anticipation

For TV and radio, study the personality of the interviewer, the types of questions typically asked, the tone and format of the program and the general attitude towards health professionals and dentists in particular. For example: is there audience participation?...question and answer periods?

For print media, general assignment reporters may lack background in dentistry. On the other hand, health and science reporters may be very familiar with issues you wish to discuss. Several simple questions at the beginning of a media contact will reveal the interviewer's subject knowledge and save you from either talking over their heads or appearing condescending.

Reporters try to be accurate, but they oftentimes make interpretations if: 1) they think the facts are subject to judgment, or 2) they need a "reporter's angle." To stay in control of the interview and to limit incorrect interpretations, present all facts in an interesting manner, but with authority.

Keep Exhaustive Notes

For all media contacts, keep separate notes on each interviewer. Write down the date and subjects talked about immediately after every contact. Oftentimes you need to talk to several different people at one media outlet before you're connected with the "right" person.

Sometimes the producer or editor will specifically tell you about his or her audience. This can greatly help you focus your interview, but you still need to do your background research to get a comprehensive feel for each particular media outlet.

Subject Focus

Thesis. In one sentence, what idea would you like to leave with the audience? Write it out, make it simple, and use it to organize your interview.

Outline. List 3 to 5 major ideas that can be used to develop your thesis. Put them in order so the audience can follow your logic.

Body. Support your main ideas with simple, clear statements. Use short sentences (17 words or less). Make points concrete and real with the *limited* use of simple statistics. Example: "Many Americans will develop gum disease" is not as powerful as: "Ninety percent of all Americans will, at some time, have gum disease."

Avoid jargon or any dental terms that might be unfamiliar to the typical audience. A few key terms, like "gingivitis" and "periodontal disease", must of course be explained.

Informational, Not Commercial, Emphasis

Obviously, many editors and producers will immediately be reluctant to hear you out if they think you're trying to get free commercial time for either yourself or the INTERPLAK instrument. So present yourself and your subject in a newsworthy manner.

Several possible news topics include:

- New developments in dental health
- The Plaque Controversy (e.g., the toothpaste and mouthwash companies versus the FDA)
- The new interest in gum disease
- What exactly is "Gum Disease" and why is it a problem?

Print Interviews: Credible, Detailed Coverage With An Eye On Interest

Before the Interview

Meet the Interviewer. If possible, personal contact is the best way to study the interviewer's needs.

Give Background Information. Provide as much advance material as possible. Do not schedule the interview until the interviewer has all the advanced materials he or she has asked for.

Choose Your Key Points. What will be your main positive ideas? How will you support these ideas?

Anticipate. What questions do you anticipate? In what tone? Will your answers be clear and to the point?

During the Interview

State Your Main Ideas Simply. Use short sentences. Don't ramble or express unsubstantiated personal opinions. Stick to the facts. Resist the temptation to say things "off the top of your head" or any new, untested ideas.

Tell Vivid Examples. Personal anecdotes, illustrations, and case histories speak directly to the audience. Use concrete words.

Don't Guess Or Speculate. Reporters can sense when you are uncomfortable with a topic, and any unsubstantiated statement could discredit you. When you do not know the answer to a specific question, say: "I don't know, but I will find out and get back to you". Be sure your follow-up meets the reporter's deadline.

Don't Lie. Misleading information will catch up with you.

Don't Repeat Negatives. Repeating a negative statement, even to deny it, is a mistake. If you are quoted making the denial, the original negative statement is: 1) repeated, 2) appears next to your name, and 3) makes you seem defensive. Use positive statements to refute negative questions.

There Is No Such Thing As "Off The Record." A reporter can always attribute your comments to you or a "dental source."

Let The Writers Write. Do not ask the reporter how the information you've given him or her will be used. That's up to the reporter and the editors. Oftentimes they will tell you how the information will be used—that is *not* an invitation to edit or critique the article. If you are asked to check the facts in written material, just check the facts.

Restate Your Points. A brief summary is helpful to both the reporter and the readers.

On the Air: Electronic Interviews Before The Interview

Prepare. Have two or three positive, accurate ideas that you want to make. Center your answers around them.

Practice. Get a group of your colleagues together and have them "grill" you on the subject. Tape record or, better yet, video tape the sessions and critique them. Keep trying to improve your shortcomings and monitor your effectiveness.

During The Interview

Be Enthusiastic and Positive. Demonstrate the importance of your subject by being enthusiastic. Make a decisive transition from dental health *problems* to dental health *solutions*. This is your chance to show the positive concern and efforts made by the dental profession.

Sharpen Your Ideas. Radio and television are condensed media. Your 30 minute interview could be cut to 30 seconds for actual broadcast. For these short broadcasts, think of your subject in short, positive headlines.

Be Yourself. Imagine yourself having a discussion in your living room. Talk in conversational tones. Use interesting, relevant anecdotes to demonstrate your points.

Use The Interviewer's First Name. This will make you seem comfortable and relaxed with both the interviewer and the subject.

Concentrate. Focus on the interviewer, the questions, and your answers. Don't be distracted by the technical crew, and never tell the crew how to do their job.

Know When To Talk. There are two kinds of people interviewers dread: those who answer questions tersely and those who talk too much without ever getting to their answer. Study the particular medium format—does the interviewer like quick and snappy answers, or does the show seek slightly more in-depth responses? When you have answered the question, stop.

Television

The all-important question for television is: what will the viewer *see*? Do you appear to be sincere, knowledgeable, and confident? Do you have something of interest to show?

Visual Aids. If possible, use colorful, up-to-date slides, charts, graphs, models, and video footage that correspond closely to your dialog. Always inform the producer of the show in advance about any visual aids you might use and be prepared to send them a few days in advance of your appearance.

Look The Interviewer In The Eye. Unless told otherwise, do not look into the camera. Eye contact connotes confidence, respect, and sincerity; avoiding eye contact makes you appear defensive, unsure, or distracted.

Relax. Television quickly shows nervousness. Relax and enjoy being part of the show.

Keep A Straight, Natural Posture. Do not slink in your chair or otherwise attempt to act like William F. Buckley. Instead, lean forward slightly: this will give you a look of confidence and make you feel more alert. Don't fidget; move naturally.

Always Assume You're On-Camera. Act as if the camera is focused on you at all times. Oftentimes when the interviewer is talking, the camera will be on *you* for your reaction. After the interview, do not assume you are off camera until you are told so.

Dress Carefully. Wear conservative, simple clothes to interviews. White shirts reflect light harshly and can make you appear ghost-like.

Questions And Answers From The Audience. Look the questioner in the eye during his or her question. If the question is inaudible, repeat it for all to hear (rephrase any hostile or negative language). Begin your answer looking at the questioner, then make eye contact with different parts of the audience for a few seconds at a time to help pull them into the dialog.

Radio

Avoid Monotones. Listen to the radio and note what makes a voice interesting. Then take a tape recorder and practice talking about your subject. People will ignore a monotone dialog even if it's on a subject that might otherwise interest them. Try to vary your pitch, volume, and rate of speaking to emphasize what you are saying.

Delete All Vocal Fillers. "Ah," "um" and "you know" occur over 30 times a minute in some people's speech. Use the tape recorder and colleagues to break these distracting habits.

Call-In Shows. Call-in shows can be effective if you are first given an opportunity to explain your subject to the host and the audience. If a caller should try to monopolize your time describing a dental problem, you are not required to give specific dental care advice. Tell the caller that his or her problem can be best addressed in an office visit that actually examines the teeth and the overall health of the patient.

General Interview Tips

Stagefright

Simply stated, stagefright is the fear of "messing up" in public. The more practiced you are, the more comprehensive your anticipation, and the more you know about your subject and how it "fits" into the show, the less you have to fear.

You will gain confidence by answering anticipated questions in front of a tape recorder, video camera, or group of impartial colleagues. Before the interview, you should feel slightly nervous, but confident; it's similar to being well prepared for an important exam. As the interview follows your anticipated sequence, your nervousness will fall away.

The Paraphrasing Interviewer.

Occasionally an interviewer might try to put his or her interpretation into your mouth by saying "You mean to say that... ." If you agree with the interpretation, let it stand; otherwise, say "No, that is not what I meant. What I meant was....," then repeat, word for word, your statement.

Delivery

Don't memorize your answers; if you lose your place, you could be speechless. Instead, remember your main ideas and practice stating them several different ways. Be flexible, but always state your ideas clearly.

Don't rush—you may not be understood.

Hostile Interviewers

If you've done your homework, there shouldn't be any. The few shows, hosts, and columnists that have a well-deserved reputation for negative interviewing and reporting will not be appropriate for your subject.

If a normally benign interviewer tries to add some "spark" to the session, remain calm and don't become defensive. Lead off your answer with a strong phrase, like: "Actually, quite the opposite is true." Back up your positive answer with a simple fact or statistic. You will have satisfied the interviewer by being more lively and you will have made your point in a positive manner.

Commonly Asked Questions About the INTERPLAK Instrument

How Is The INTERPLAK Different From An Ordinary Electric Toothbrush?

Electric toothbrushes have a random, vibratory bristle motion. On the other hand, each of the INTERPLAK instrument's ten tufts of bristles *rotate* in the opposite direction of adjacent tufts. After one and a half revolutions, every tuft reverses direction.

The ten tufts of bristles rotate at the equivalent rate of 4200 times a minute, changing direction *46 times a second*.

This rapid revolution/counterrevolution motion drives the very fine bristles between teeth and beneath the gumline—two areas not readily reached by either conventional or electric toothbrushes.

If It's So Powerful, Is It Safe To Use?

The bristles are four times softer than the softest toothbrush. The INTERPLAK device is no more abrasive than manual brushing. The INTERPLAK instrument has the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance, meaning that based on clinical studies, the ADA has determined that the INTERPLAK is both safe and effective.

If I Use The INTERPLAK Instrument, Do I Still Need To Floss?

Yes. Flossing still remains an essential part of dental home care. What INTERPLAK instrument users discover, however, is that there is much less food debris and plaque to floss away after using the INTERPLAK device.

Isn't \$99 Too Much To Pay For A Toothbrush?

How much are your teeth worth?

Dentists will tell you that the vast majority of patients have a "Compliance Problem": they either promise to brush and floss regularly and *don't*, or they really *do try* to brush and floss but are ineffective.

And at the current rate, 90% of all Americans will develop a form of gum disease. This epidemic is preventable and people *need not* suffer the ravages of periodontal disease.

What's The Difference Between Plaque and Tartar?

(Obviously you know the difference, but many people are confused by current ad campaigns of "Tartar Control" toothpastes. Emphasize that plaque is the real issue, since it is the cause of both gum disease and tartar.)

What Kind Of Toothpaste Should I Use?

Any toothpaste that has the ADA Seal of Acceptance is fine. Specifically avoid highly abrasive toothpastes—they do not have the ADA Seal. *Consumer Reports* lists toothpaste abrasion levels.

Can I Use Toothpaste With The INTERPLAK?

Yes. You can put a little toothpaste on the bristles, or you can just moisten the bristles with plain water. Either way is effective since the real work of plaque removal is done through the mechanical action of the rotating bristles.

Some people like to quickly spread toothpaste throughout their mouth with a conventional toothbrush, and then use the INTERPLAK device for thorough cleaning. Others prefer to use a fluoridated mouthwash.

Can People With Braces Use The INTERPLAK Device?

Yes. Clinical studies show that orthodontic patients using the INTERPLAK device can keep their teeth 84% plaque-free, well within the plaque levels dentists have historically desired for orthodontic patients.

The high-speed rotation/counterrotation bristle action penetrates the plaque-retaining areas created by orthodontic bands, brackets, and wires. Lower plaque levels, in turn, reduce common orthodontic complaints of gum inflammation, white spot lesions, and cavities along the gumlines.

Can The Handicapped or Elderly Benefit From The INTERPLAK Instrument?

Older people and persons with handicaps or arthritis are understandably even less effective than the rest of the population in removing dental plaque. The INTERPLAK device is a real boon to the disabled because it is easier than hand brushing—users just guide the INTERPLAK instrument's head along their teeth and gumlines.

While the INTERPLAK instrument's bristle tufts rotate at 4200 times per minute, the unit's head remains very still, making handling simple.

Is It Safe For Children?


Yes. Children who have been frustrated by the rigors of manual brushing enjoy using the INTERPLAK device. The color-coordinated interchangeable heads allow several children to use the same instrument.

Isn't This Just A High-Tech Gadget For Dental Health Fanatics?

No. Healthy, vigorous adults manually brush their teeth at a rate of 160 strokes per minute and only remove about one half of their dental plaque.

The same adults, when given an INTERPLAK, have achieved up to 98.2% plaque removal.

Over one million units have been sold. Fifty percent of the people using the INTERPLAK instrument purchased it because of a dentist's recommendation. Eighteen months after purchase, a remarkable 94% of the owners still use the device regularly.

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