

Choosing a Laser: What Features Should You Consider?

Having the right technology in your office is essential for running an efficient, state-of-the-art dental practice. In some cases, it can mean the difference between referring a patient to a specialist and being able to deliver same-day-dentistry in the environment where your patient is most comfortable. On the business side, the cost of this additional technology must be weighed against its return on investment and the speed at which this occurs. From the clinical perspective, consider what advantages this technology will bring for the clinician and the patient, and how will it improve the procedural outcome.

Soft tissue surgery frequently gets referred to a periodontist or oral surgeon. There may be a reluctance to provide these treatments in-office, as they often involve the use of a scalpel and sutures, with the real possibility of post-operative discomfort. Additionally, these procedures frequently require subsequent follow-up appointments. Although an electrocautery device can speed up certain procedures, it is not without its clinical challenges. The obvious alternative to both the scalpel and electrocautery, or having to refer patients elsewhere, is a soft tissue laser. This technology has been around for many years and thankfully the costs of purchasing a laser have decreased considerably since their introduction. Understanding your particular needs for soft tissue laser therapy helps to narrow the choices.

Wavelength

One of the first considerations to be made when choosing a soft tissue laser is its wavelength. Different types of lasers operate at different wavelengths, producing varying results. The **Bluewave™ Soft Tissue Diode Laser** from **Clinician's Choice** operates at 810nm, where it has a high affinity to hemoglobin and melanin, which is ideal for oral soft tissue while rendering it safe to use around implants and won't affect bone.

Power

Available power is another factor that depends on how you intend to use your laser. **Bluewave** has two modes of operation: pulse and continuous wave, at 5W and 3W respectively. Not only is this more than enough power, its rechargeable, lithium ion-battery maintains this power-level for up to three hours of continuous use on one charge. Cordless operation, along with its light weight (2.55lbs), and built-in handle, makes Bluewave truly portable, allowing the clinician to move between operatories with ease.

Ease of Use

The versatile **Bluewave** diode laser performs a wide range of soft tissue procedures. **Bluewave's** easy-to-use display includes three category pre-sets (debride, perio, and cut) and one custom setting for individual user preferences. While a scalpel can be deftly manipulated in the skilled hand, it will always require the control of bleeding and suturing of the wound, and will often lead to post-operative inflammation and pain. While producing less hemorrhage, electrocautery results in deep and wide zones of necrosis leading to charring, slower healing and recession, and cannot be used safely around dental implants. The **Bluewave** laser easily replaces the scalpel and the electrosurgery unit.

Versatility

The **Bluewave** laser cuts tissue, coagulates blood vessels, cauterizes nerve endings, and sterilizes the surgical site all at the same time, producing a more predictable surgical result with faster and more comfortable healing. In many cases, definitive restorative treatment can take place at the same appointment. With an uninitiated tip, non-surgical applications such as laser-assisted periodontal therapy, laser bacterial reduction, and sulcular debridement can enhance and expand the scope of in-office periodontal procedures offered.

Visibility

Adding even more precision to the procedure, **Bluewave's** unique blue-aiming light contrasts better in blood and intraoral tissue than the common red-aiming light found in the majority of other lasers. The disposable 4mm standard and 9mm perio tips are easily placed on and removed (no time-consuming stripping and cleaving), and a wireless foot pedal minimizes clutter around the operator, making set-up easy, even for unanticipated use.

Cost

The **Bluewave Soft Tissue Diode Laser** is one of the most affordable soft tissue lasers on the market. Its versatility and portability create great value for the practice and ensure a high return on investment in a short time through expanded services, more predictability, and time-saving procedures, as well as limiting the number of referrals to specialists. Practices can expect incremental revenue from increased services and case acceptance, while patients benefit from proven technology that places their comfort and the quality of treatment as a priority.

