

Aloha and welcome back!

In this video, we're going to show you a simple strategy to get you quickly through the learning curve of how to use your pocket applicator.

By applying this strategy, you'll be able to care for even difficult-to-access pockets in very little time.

So let's jump right in!

First, let's show you several different ways to hold your pocket applicator.

As we discussed in the last video, the strategy is for us to be able to get the tip of the pocket applicator down into the **base** of the gum pocket, then deliver 1-2 drops of solution into that infected pocket.

So, the first thing for you to learn in this video is the different ways you can hold your pocket applicator while maintaining a soft touch to push on the plunger (so you don't put a whole pocket applicator's worth of solution into one gum pocket).

We encourage you to pause the video and go grab your pocket applicator so you can try each method with us here with nothing in your applicator.

At first, you may find it easiest to use two hands like this, with one hand holding the applicator body and the other pushing on the plunger.

While you're just starting out, this gives you adequate control of the applicator.

However, as you get more comfortable using it, keep in mind that the pocket applicator is really designed to be used in one hand, as this helps you to skillfully deliver as little solution as you can.

Here are two ways to hold the applicator in one hand.

One way is like a needle syringe, where you hold the tabs on the applicator body between your index and middle finger and put your thumb on the plunger, like this.

And the second way is to put the plunger in the palm of your hand and hold the applicator body with your thumb and fingers.

We find that this strategy really gives us the most control over how much solution is delivered into our gum pockets.

So, just be aware of all three options and play with each to find which works best for you.

In truth, depending on the angle at which you need to hold the applicator to access the pocket, you'll most likely develop skill using all of these methods.

Next, let's cover how to fill your pocket applicator.

You'll want to start with the plunger fully pushed in, then put the tip of the applicator into the solution of your choice and gently pull back on the plunger, like this.

Quick pro tip:

If you are using a solution with salt in it, keep the tip off of the bottom of the cup when filling it.

This will help you avoid sucking up a grain of salt that hasn't fully dissolved.

A salt grain can clog the pocket applicator tip, preventing it from working.

Just in case this happens to you, we will address how to unclog your pocket applicator in the 'Pocket Applicator FAQ' section.

If you are using our HealThy Mouth Blend in your pocket applicator, simply remove the lid and pop out the plastic insert, being careful to not spill the bottle.

Then, insert your pocket applicator tip into the blend and draw back on the plunger.

Now that we have a solution in the pocket applicator, we suggest you hold it with the tip up and gently flick or tap the applicator body with your fingers to encourage any air bubbles to move toward the tip.

Then, gently press on the plunger to force out the air bubbles.

While this is not a critically important step, we have learned that leaving air bubbles in the pocket applicator while you're using it can cause the plunger to skip around and not function as smoothly as it would otherwise.

So, just point the tip up and tap the applicator body to move any bubbles to the tip, then press the plunger until you get a little fluid to exit.

Now you are completely ready to use your pocket applicator, so let's cover this 'getting started' strategy.

GETTING STARTED

The best strategy to get you proficient as quickly as possible is that you commit to practicing with your pocket applicator for 20 minutes each day for 2 weeks.

We have found that 2 weeks of regular practice is enough time to get you fully capable using the pocket applicator around your mouth (and on the other hand, it's also a short enough time that it doesn't seem too daunting of a commitment to make to yourself :).

In this video, we're going to outline the first 4 days of use. Be sure to look in your HealThy Mouth Handbook for more coaching steps, as this 2-week timeline is clearly explained there.

Here's what we're going to do:

Set aside 20 minutes each day to practice using your pocket applicator.

You'll start out by only treating a few of your pockets.

Each day, you'll use the pocket applicator on more and more pockets.

And by the end of these two weeks, you'll be able to treat **all** the pockets around all of your teeth in this same 20 minutes.

You'll need the following supplies:

1. Your pocket applicator
2. The solution you plan to use
3. A mirror (at first)
4. A good light source
5. A 20-minute timer
6. A copy of an OraWellness Mouth Map and a pen

Day 1:

On day 1, you're going to focus on just your **four bottom front teeth**.

What we're looking to do on day one is just get you started using the pocket applicator.

Now we're going to put together everything we've covered so far about using the pocket applicator.

Practice all the steps you've learned so far: filling the applicator, tapping it to get bubbles out, holding the applicator tip parallel to your tooth, and slipping the tip under the gum line either by going directly under or by using the sideways slide technique if you have really tight gums.

We're going to feel for the bottom of the pocket and, once there, push the plunger a bit to deliver 1-2 drops of solution.

Then we're going to move to the next pocket and do the same thing.

So, in 20 minutes on day 1, you should be able to successfully care for all 6 pockets around each of your four front teeth.

Remember to care for **all 6 pockets**, so you'll have to care for the pockets on the inner, tongue-side of your front teeth, too.

When you find that you have too much fluid in your mouth, just spit it out and continue with your care.

If you finish your 4 front teeth in less than your 20 minutes, go ahead and try some or all of your top front teeth until your timer is done.

Keep in mind, gum pockets around our front teeth tend to be rather shallow.

So, don't be surprised if you're not able to get much under the edge before you reach the base of that pocket.

That's ok, as you're practicing getting over the 'all thumbs' feeling of using your pocket applicator.

Once your timer goes off, rinse your applicator with warm water by filling it and fully pressing down on the plunger a few times.

If you used a salt solution, pay particular attention to rinsing it thoroughly because if you leave any salt water in the applicator to dry, the salt can recrystallize and plug your applicator tip.

So, be extra sure to rinse your pocket applicator **several times** with warm water after using it.

Then, leave it to dry for use tomorrow.

For more detailed instructions on cleaning your pocket applicator, please watch the FAQ titled "How to clean your pocket applicator".

Day 2:

So, on day two, we are pretty much just going to do the same as day one.

To help get you comfortable with getting up and running, just take your time to follow the steps.

Make your solution before you set your timer.

Then fill your applicator, tap to clear bubbles, hold the applicator parallel to your tooth, gently enter the gum pocket, feeling for the bottom (the base of the pocket) as you go.

Once you're there, gently apply a drop or two of solution into the base and move on.

Remember, once you are under the gum line, you may be able to keep the applicator tip under the gum line and gently slide the tip to the next pocket location.

Then, once you've moved the tip, you reach for the base of the pocket, apply a couple drops, and move on.

While this slide technique will be most helpful when caring for your molars, be willing to give it a try today just so you can learn this helpful strategy.

If you are able to get all four of your front teeth done before your 20-minute timer goes off, then practice using the pocket applicator on the next tooth on each side.

In this case, you'll be caring for your **front 6 teeth** today.

Again, once your timer is done, **thoroughly** flush your pocket applicator with warm water and set it aside to dry.

Day 3:

Ok, with day three, you'll be starting to get the hang of it.

So, it's time to really take your skills to the next level.

On day 3, we are going to build the skills that we'll need to care for gum pockets around molars.

You see, the molars are where we tend to need the most attention, as gum disease really undermines our oral health most profoundly in this area.

The problem is that it's difficult to see what we're doing that far back in our mouths.

Even if you choose to use an 'oh-so-attractive' lip and cheek retractor, using your eyes to see what you're doing can only go so far.

As a side note, we actually **don't** recommend using a lip and cheek retractor, because they often just get in the way.

Ultimately, we have to **feel** our way into the gum pockets around our molars.

So, today we're going to begin to cultivate awareness of what it feels to treat our gum pockets with our **eyes closed** (yes, eyes closed! :).

We're going to do just our four front teeth again today, but this time, we're going to feel our way through it.

Trust us on this.

By learning how to feel your way for applying the solution in your gum pockets, you'll never be limited by whether or not you can see what you're doing.

So, here we go!

With your eyes closed, I want you to feel the angle of the tip of the pocket applicator, feel how it lays almost right against the surface of your tooth as you gently slip the tip of the applicator into the gum pocket.

You may find it helpful to use your second hand to maintain a feel on the angle of the applicator tip.

It's totally fine to close your eyes, practice feeling the applicator tip to be at the right angle to enter the gum pocket, then peek and make sure you are on track, then close your eyes again.

What you'll probably find is that with your eyes closed, you will be much more attuned to when you reach the **base** of gum pockets.

By removing the distraction of trying to see a spot that's under the gum line anyway, you'll develop the valuable skill of feeling your way.

Take your time with this today.

In the true sense of play, look to explore like a child as you develop the skill to feel your way through this eyes-closed exercise.

Again, if we always rely on sight and don't develop the skill to feel our way through using the pocket applicator, we're never going to be able to address this as effectively as if we learn to feel what's going on.

See if you can care for your four front teeth again with your eyes closed.

And when your 20-minute timer is done, thoroughly flush your pocket applicator with warm water and store it to dry.

Day 4:

Ok, with day 4 we're going to increase the number of teeth we're going to care for.

Today, we're going to treat all pockets around the **6 front teeth**, on both the upper and lower jaws.

But today, you get your eyes back :).

That said, if you want to practice some with eyes closed, go for it as it's great practice.

Just take your time and work your way through the front 6 teeth on the bottom, and then tackle the top 6, too.

You'll surprise yourself with how quickly you'll pick up the skill necessary to care for this many pockets in just 4 days of practice.

Once your timer goes off, stop (even if you didn't get through all 12 teeth) flush your pocket applicator thoroughly with warm water and store it to dry.

Day 5 and beyond:

Ok, at this point, you've practiced using your pocket applicator on your front 6 teeth, both top and bottom.

What you have done is cared for all teeth between your 'canine' teeth.

We consider the canines kind of like the 'corners' of our dental arch.

They stand between our front teeth and our back teeth.

Now, you're going to develop the skill to care for your molars.

And like we've said many times, the molars are where this care is needed the most.

This is when you are going to be very glad you've learned to feel your way instead of relying on sight.

You simply can't see what you're doing once you get back far enough.

The good news is that the maximum number of molars you have is 5, and most of us have had our wisdom teeth removed, so that leaves only 4 in each quadrant.

Day by day, give yourself 20 minutes, each day increasing the number of teeth you include.

In 2 weeks' time, you'll be able to care for your whole mouth within 20 minutes.

At this point, move forward at your own pace.

You are the MVP of your oral health journey.

Remember, be willing to close your eyes to better focus and feel what's going.

Now, we should probably discuss discomfort.

There are a few different types of pain that we want to describe here so you know what to expect and also whether you're doing something wrong.

To start, let's get clear that if you are using your pocket applicator correctly, you will not experience pain.

To reiterate, we are **not** injecting or piercing any tissue.

We are simply gently slipping the pocket applicator tip between the tooth root and surrounding gum tissue.

No needling going on here, ok?

The first type of discomfort occurs when you apply a salt solution into an infected pocket.

In this situation, you may experience a pinch of pain, or what we have always called 'a zinger'.

Yeah, it can hurt for a moment, but we learned to reframe this discomfort because if you get a zinger, you can feel confident that you just found an active infection and really made progress in stopping the infection in that pocket.

When you have a zinger, make sure you note it on your Mouth Map, as you very much want to revisit that spot again tomorrow to be sure to keep knocking back those thug bugs .

Trust us, over time these areas get less and less zingy, until surprisingly quickly, you don't have them any longer and you have balanced your oral flora in what was an infected gum pocket.

The second type of discomfort you may experience is from over stressing your gum tissue.

If you are too rough (which is normal at first as you're learning how to use the pocket applicator) your gums can become a bit sore.

There's nothing wrong with taking a break for a day if you need to.

Also, putting a drop of HealThy Mouth Blend directly onto your finger and gently rubbing the blend onto any stressed area can really help to soothe any inflamed tissue.

Just be extra gentle as you caringly rub some HealThy Mouth Blend on your gums.

The third type of discomfort we want to touch on is tooth sensitivity.

In general, you should not experience increased sensitivity.

However, if you do find that your teeth are more sensitive and you are using a salt and diluted peroxide solution, you'll want to reduce the amount of peroxide you are using.

Remember, it's perfectly fine to omit the peroxide altogether and just use salt water if you find that the peroxide makes your teeth sensitive.

This was a lot of information to digest, so please consider watching this again just to make sure you really understand how to get started.

Also, please refer to your HealThy Mouth Handbook for a more thorough description of these first 2 weeks.

Feel free to holler with any questions; we're here to help.

In the next video, we will share different pocket applicator strategies that you can use over time to help you navigate to optimal oral health.

We'll see you in the next video!