

Welcome back!

Since you now know how to make a solution to use in your pocket applicator and the pros and cons of the various types of solutions, in this video we're going to discuss how to effectively use your pocket applicator.

As you'll see in future videos, later we'll explore some additional strategies you may find helpful.

But first, we need to establish the foundational understanding of how to use your pocket applicator.

One more quick point, after you've watched this video and before you start applying this strategy in your mouth, please also watch the next video titled, "How to get through the learning curve using your pocket applicator".

This video will help you quickly and easily develop proficiency using your pocket applicator.

With that, let's jump right in!

To start, let's discuss what we mean when we refer to 'gum pockets', as well as how the microbes involved with gum disease thrive.

This will help you understand how to successfully apply this powerful strategy in order to maximize your results from this program.

Each of our teeth is anchored to a section of the jaw bone.

Our teeth form under the gum line when we're young.

As we get a little older, our teeth erupt through the gums, and they are hugged on all sides by gum tissue.

The part that we can see above the gum line is called the 'crown' of the tooth, and the part of the tooth that's still below the gum line and anchored to the jaw bone is called the 'root'.

There is a naturally-occurring small space between each tooth and its surrounding gum tissue (for example, think of how when you floss, you actually move the floss into the space between your teeth and gums).

This space between each of our teeth and the surrounding gum tissue is called the 'gingival sulcus', or 'gum pocket'.

In this module, the gum pocket is where we will be focusing our supportive attention.

We have come to view the gum pocket as a very unique zone in the human body. Here are 4 reasons why:

1. Gum pockets are essentially 'outside' the body.
2. Because of all the food, drinks, products, etc. that we put into our mouths each day, our gum pockets are prone to coming into contact with lots of different influences (and microbes) from the outside world.
3. The gum pocket provides a low oxygen environment, which allows for different species of microbes to thrive.
4. And the fourth factor that makes our gum pockets a unique zone in the body is, thanks to the capillaries in our gum tissue, the microbes that live in our gum pockets can gain direct access into the entire body via the bloodstream.

These factors combined make the gum pockets a really, really wonderful place for disease-causing microbes to take up residence.

Why?

Well, while I generally avoid using war analogies, in this case, it's applicable.

So now, let's turn our attention to how these disease-causing microbes function and thrive.

We're going to use an analogy of some invaders looking to attack a town.

Let's say you wanted to invade a town--where would you want to put your basecamp with your small army so you're ready to stage your attack?

You'd want to be right on the edge of the town so you could get your troops into the town easily, right?

But you wouldn't want to put your base actually *inside* the town because if you did that, the town's defense systems would be constantly attacking you and trying to destroy your base.

So the best scenario for you would be to set up camp right outside the edge of town, just outside the town's defense wall.

And right next to your camp you cut a hole into their perimeter wall that your troops can use to sneak in and out of town.

In this way, you can build up your numbers 'outside' the town and not have to worry about being constantly harassed and attacked by their defense system.

But, you're really close and you have your secret access point to sneak troops in and out of town.

Unfortunately, this is exactly what the thug bugs are doing in most of the adult mouths on the planet.

You see, the gum pocket is an area where bacteria can and do colonize.

Now, this colonization isn't a bad thing.

Like we've covered in other videos, we wouldn't be here without bacteria to support our lives.

However, whether the colonization of the gum pocket is going to support our health or undermine it largely depends on what species of bacteria are allowed and encouraged to colonize in our gum pockets.

Unlike other areas of the body that are often exposed to the outside world (like our skin), our gum pockets can become very anaerobic, or low oxygen, environments.

This low oxygen environment encourages certain species to thrive, some of which can really wreak havoc on the immune system and, as a result, on the entire body.

And, as we've covered in our oral hygiene foundations module, this is the intent behind the conscious oral hygiene that we encourage--to be a good conductor of the symphony of microbes in our mouths.

By making sure that the thug bugs aren't allowed to dominate our gum pockets, we prevent gum disease from taking hold and undermining our health.

You see, as gum disease progresses, the gum tissue around the teeth becomes inflamed and red, then bleeds when probed, then eventually the gum pockets get deeper and deeper.

This deepening of gum pockets is really a problem for several reasons.

First, having deeper gum pockets, especially around our molars, makes it more difficult for us to disrupt and disorganize the thug bugs' colonization efforts

(because now they have a great hiding place that's challenging for us to reach).

Second, the deeper the pocket, the more anaerobic (low oxygen) the environment, the more easily the thug bugs can dominate that zone.

And third, as gum pockets deepen, it makes our teeth more and more prone to increased sensitivity, cracking, breaking, and eventually falling out due to loss of the connective tissue that anchors our teeth into our jaw bones.

One last point to establish as our foundation, the key in stopping the progression of gum disease is to persistently lower the populations of thug bugs at the **base** of the gum pockets.

The base of the gum pocket is the deepest part of any pocket you find around your teeth.

So now you understand the anatomy of the gum pockets and how thug bugs work to dominate that zone.

Let's turn our attention to learning how to use the pocket applicator to stop this colonization effort.

So, the general strategy is to draw up some antimicrobial solution of your choice into the pocket applicator, gently wiggle or slip the tip of the pocket applicator into the gum pockets at different points around our teeth, and deposit a drop or two of the solution at the **base** of our gum pockets.

In this way, we're not blasting the region with lots of water like some oral irrigators do.

Instead, we're quietly slipping into the infected region with as little disruption as possible so we don't stress out the already-irritated gum tissue, and then we're simply depositing a drop or two of an antimicrobial solution in the area to reduce the number of bacteria at the base of the pocket.

Doing this consistently will balance the symphony of microbes in the gum pocket, stopping the infection.

Make sense so far?

By diligently lowering the populations of thug bugs in the base of the gum pockets, we can turn around what many dentists and periodontists believe is the 'point of no return' for periodontal disease.

We have truly lost count of the number of HealThy Mouth System customers who have emailed us through the years stating that their loose teeth have tightened back up in their jaw, and that their dentist is scratching their head trying to figure out how they did this.

Just take this step by step; you can do this, too!

Here are 4 foundational points to the pocket applicator strategy.

Foundational point #1:

Keep the applicator tip parallel to the tooth

In order to get the pocket applicator tip into the gum pocket, we want to lay the tip of the applicator parallel to the tooth we're caring for.

It's important to adjust the angle of the tip as necessary so that as we lower the tip into the gum pocket, it can easily slip into the space.

It makes sense if you think about it.

We can't slip the applicator tip into the gum pocket if the tip is angled away from the tooth, like this.

Most people can simply slip the tip of the applicator into the gum pocket.

But for some people, the gum tissue may have become swollen and tight around the teeth.

If this is the case, an alternate strategy to access the gum pocket is to go as low as you can on the tooth, then slide the tip of the applicator laterally to slip sideways into the gum pocket.

Generally speaking, gum pockets on the 'corners' of our teeth will be deeper than the pockets in the middle point on each tooth.

Part of this is due to the fact that our gum tissue is a bit thicker between our teeth.

Another reason why the gum pockets near the 'corners' of our teeth tend to be deeper is because gum disease really thrives there, which makes sense, since plaque and food particles tend to build up in these areas.

Foundational point #2:

Feel for the **base** of the pocket

As we discussed previously, the active infection is in the deepest part of the gum pocket.

This is what we call the 'base' of the gum pocket.

It's very important that we use the pocket applicator tip to gently reach deeper into gum pockets until we feel the tip bottom out.

You'll feel the applicator tip bottom out simply because you won't be able to gently slip it any further into the pocket.

Incidentally, this is one reason why the pocket applicator is so very effective.

Because of the 12mm length of the applicator tip, we are able to reach deeply into any infected gum pockets.

Since we must get to the **base** of the pocket, we have to have a tool that can help us reach down as far as we need to go to disrupt and disorganize the thug bug colonies.

For comparison, floss only reaches 4mm into gum pockets, which is why most dentists consider 5mm pockets to be the 'cut off' and will suggest advanced treatment at that point.

Again, you're just going to slip the applicator tip under the gum line, keeping the tip parallel to the tooth surface, and feel when you can't easily get it to go any deeper.

If you find that you're really having difficulty accessing the base of your gum pockets or are able to get just a little into the pocket only to feel the tip bottom out (but you know that pocket is deep), be sure to watch the video in our Pocket Applicator FAQ section titled, "How to get around calculus ledges".

For some of you watching this video, you may find that the thug bugs have created hardened plaque, or 'calculus' (tartar), under the gum line.

This is a really important distinction, so we have devoted an entire video titled, "How to get around calculus ledges" so you can be sure to understand how to address this issue if you find you can't access pockets you know are infected.

Presuming you're able to get into the pocket, once you reach the **base** of the gum pocket, you'll gently push on the plunger of the pocket applicator to deliver 1-2 drops of your solution at the base of the gum pocket.

We'll cover this next in foundational point #3, but before we move on, remember, always seek the **base** of the pocket by feeling that the tip won't easily go any further under the surface.

Foundational point #3:

Apply 1-2 drops of antimicrobial solution in each pocket.

Part of the effectiveness of the pocket applicator is that it is a gentle way to help us to lower the thug bug populations in infected gum pockets.

Rather than potentially irritating our gums further by blasting a bunch of water or other solution into the gum pocket, with the pocket applicator, we can gently slip in, deposit the right amount of antimicrobial solution in the pocket, and gently slip out without causing any further irritation or damage to the sensitive gum tissue.

To restate, we aren't looking to irrigate the pocket with lots of fluid.

The research actually suggests that using lots of fluid at too high of a pressure (like oral irrigators can do) it is possible to cause more harm than good.

The dental literature calls this 'water cannoning'.

You see, if we're dealing with infected gum pockets, flushing it with lots of fluid not only stresses the already-irritated gum tissue, but if the stream is strong enough and directed down into the gum pocket, we actually risk pushing the thug bugs through the capillaries in the gums and into the bloodstream, which is bad news.

So, rather than "sending in the marines with a big fire hose", we're going to quietly slip in, deposit a little solution to help lower the thug bug populations, and move to the next pocket.

The trick that we'll cover in the next video is to develop the manual dexterity to push gently on the plunger of your pocket applicator. That way you apply just enough.

Don't sweat it if you push and deliver more than a drop or two at first.

It will happen.

What we want to avoid is depositing a whole applicator's worth of solution in each pocket, as this would be over-irrigating the pocket rather than just delivering a small amount of solution.

Foundational point #4:

Treat 6 points around each tooth

We are going to pay attention and access 6 points around each tooth.

While in truth we have gum pockets 360 degrees around each of our teeth, focusing on depositing drops at these 6 points will cover enough surface area to knock down the numbers of thug bugs all around the tooth.

Let's take a closer look so you can get a visual example of what we mean by '6 points' around each tooth.

If we focus on just one tooth, we have 3 points on the inner, tongue side of the tooth and 3 points on the outer, cheek side of each tooth.

On each side, we have a point that's more toward the back of the mouth, a point in the middle region of the tooth, and a point that's nearer the front of the mouth.

Here's a pro tip that will help:

As you work on one tooth, once you are in the pocket, you don't have to exit that pocket fully and then re-enter the pocket right next to it.

You can enter on one corner of the tooth, treat there, then lift the applicator a bit and gently slide it to the middle area of that same tooth, feel for the **base** and deliver a couple drops there, then lift and do it again to the other corner.

In this way, you can enter under the gum line only once (for your molars, at least) and work your way through three gum pockets before having to exit the gum line.

Ok, so now you have a deeper understanding of the gum pockets and the 4 foundational pieces of the basic pocket applicator strategy.

As a super quick recap, here they are again:

1. Keep the pocket applicator tip parallel to the tooth
2. Always feel for the **base** of the pocket
3. When you reach the base, deliver 1-2 drops of solution
4. Treat 6 points around each tooth (3 points on the cheek side and 3 points on the tongue side)

In the next video, we're going to detail a simple way to get you proficient using your pocket applicator in just a few days.

So, be sure to watch the next video before trying to use the pocket applicator.

Also, we know that this might sound like a lot to take in right now, but please know that you won't have to treat all 6 points around each tooth every day for the rest of your life.

That's why you have the Mouth Map to help keep a journal of your progress.

Over time, you'll phase out areas that haven't had any symptoms in a while.

In the “Pocket Applicator Strategies” video, you'll learn various strategies you can try based on where you are along your path to taking control of this chronic infection.

Rest assured, you can do this, just like thousands of others like you already have.

We'll see you in the next video, where we'll show you a simple ‘getting started’ routine that will help you learn to use your pocket applicator like a pro in just a few days!

Aloha!