

TRANSFORMING PATIENT EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES

Air polishing improves comfort, reduces strain, and supports long-term tissue health

WHEN I FIRST ADDED AIR POLISHING to my hygiene routine, I didn't anticipate how transformative it would be in elevating my practice. Over time, it has transformed the patient experience, improved clinical outcomes, and changed how I feel at the end of the day. From enhancing gingival health, improving the feeling of oral cleanliness, streamlining appointment times, and reducing physical strain on my body, air polishing truly can take hygiene care to the next level.

The most obvious and consistent change I've seen is in patients' gingival health and overall cleanliness. Using low-abrasive powders like glycine and erythritol allows for gentle yet thorough removal of biofilm, even in hard-to-reach areas that hand instruments sometimes miss, such as around orthodontic brackets and fixed retainers. Over several maintenance visits, I see less bleeding on probing, less plaque accumulation, less inflammation, and healthier tissue. My patients notice it too. They tell me their teeth feel smoother and feel the cleaning lasts longer between visits, which motivates them to keep up with home care.

Air polishing is especially effective during periodontal maintenance and implant care. It is gentle enough to protect titanium surfaces but effective at disrupting biofilm, helping keep peri-implant tissue healthy. Orthodontic patients are another group that benefits, as air polishing helps prevent decalcification around brackets and keeps gingiva healthier throughout the length of treatment. It's also excellent for patients with heavy stain or limited dexterity, allowing them to leave with visibly healthier, brighter smiles.

Patients notice and appreciate the difference. Many

tell me they notice less use of hand scaling, which makes the procedure more comfortable.

For anxious patients, air polishing has been a game changer. The soft spray and diminished scraping noises help create a more relaxing environment.

Efficiency is another advantage. Stain and biofilm removal is faster, freeing up time for what really matters—patient education, risk assessment, fluoride application, or simply building a stronger connection.

Air polishing has influenced my perspective on biofilm management. Rather than approaching it as a comprehensive cleaning every few months, I now view it as a continuous, minimally invasive treatment strategy. Being able to treat both supra- and subgingivally with minimal trauma allows me to maintain healthier tissue for a more productive visit.

On a personal level, I see air polishing as one of the biggest advances in my career. It's allowed me to provide care that's kinder to tissue and more comfortable for patients while reducing physical strain. I finish my day with less fatigue in my hands and wrists and with the satisfaction of knowing I've delivered more effective care.

In our practice, air polishing isn't just for hygiene. We use it before prosthetic work and for implant-supported restorations.

If you've been thinking about adding air polishing to your workflow, my advice is simple: Do it. Start with low-abrasive powders, take the time to practice, and invest in some hands-on training. The science supports it, but the real proof is in how patients respond. For me, air polishing has been one of the best additions to my hygiene toolkit, and it's helped me take my care and my career to the next level.



Annette Davila, RDH, obtained her degree in dental hygiene from Ferris State University in Michigan, and for over 25 years she has been motivating and educating her patients about their individual oral health and the impact it has on their overall wellness.