

# A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO HELPING PATIENTS WITH SENSITIVITY

Your consultation can move them from coping to living

Many people with dentin hypersensitivity (DH) have already learned to cope – even those who seem less bothered with the condition may have changed their lifestyle to manage it.<sup>1</sup>

Not only can you help your patients get the most out of life, guiding them to address DH properly is the perfect opportunity to build trust and foster stronger long-term relationships.

## MODIFYING BEHAVIOR TO COPE

DH can alter the way patients act on a daily basis.<sup>1,2</sup>



Avoid

**77%**

have avoided cold drinks or foods

**38%**

have avoided hot drinks/foods



Adapt

**81%**

change the way they eat or drink certain things

**79%**

say they make sure food doesn't touch certain teeth

**56%**

make sure they bite their food into small pieces



Compromise

**41%**

cool foods/drinks down before eating

**73%**

leave cold drinks to warm up before drinking



Tolerate

**67%**

are careful how they breathe on a cold day

**45%**

wear a scarf over their mouth on cold days

DH can be a persistent condition. Even among those patients who are less bothered about it, 48% will experience symptoms at least once a month, with 37% suffering weekly.<sup>3</sup>

And it's not just physiological. Patients forced to think twice about how they act day-to-day can suffer emotionally.<sup>2</sup> Your support can help them get back to living life to the fullest.

## RAISING THE ISSUE OF SENSITIVITY

### Questions can include:

- Do you change the way you eat or drink certain things?
- Do you make sure food doesn't touch certain teeth?
- Do you bite your food into small pieces?



**To show care and attention, ask about mouth play. Ask open questions and allow the patient to talk about that and encourage them to do so.<sup>4</sup>**

Professor Barry Gibson, Professor in Medical Sociology, School of Clinical Dentistry at the University of Sheffield, UK



### When you legitimize your patient's DH, it gives it importance by:

- Paying attention to its existence
- Normalizing it
- Offering a solution



**[This] is going to be particularly helpful to the patient as it establishes that they are not imagining things, it's not in their head, it is a problem that has a physical root to it and it is one that is worthy of the dentist's time and attention.<sup>5</sup>**

Dr Koula Asimakopoulou, Reader in Health Psychology at King's College London, UK



## REMEMBERING THE SIMPLE THINGS<sup>6,7</sup>

- Actively listen, and use open questions
- Empathize
- Explain with comprehensible language (e.g. 'you will need to change some simple day-to-day activities', instead of 'you will need to adopt behavior modification')
- Clarify information and check that the patient understands
- Use short sentences
- Provide timely, instead of premature, reassurance
- Tell the patient the important points first
- Be specific

## IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

Clinical data shows that daily use of a sensitivity toothpaste is proven to reduce the impact of sensitivity on oral health related quality of life, in particular:<sup>2</sup>

- the emotional impact
- the restrictions around their eating habits
- how they change their habits
- the social impact

A simple shift can make a big change to the quality of life of your patients.

Read more about the psychology of DH patients at:  
[www.gskhealthpartner.com](http://www.gskhealthpartner.com)

# SENSODYNE



**LIFE'S TOO SHORT FOR SENSITIVITY**

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