

Those of us that work in the dental profession are no longer aware of the “scent of dentistry” but I can vividly recall walking into our office before I was here on the daily and getting hit by a scent wall that was NOT pleasant. Patients are likely having that same negative sensory experience if your office isn’t doing anything to improve the smell of the office.

Scent is known to be one of the most powerful sensory sensations. Scent can bring back memories of loved ones passed, remind us of a special place or experience, or can have an impact on our appetite. Diffusing essential oils in the reception area, front office, and throughout those other high traffic patient areas can make a positive impact on the sensory experiences people have while at your office. Our favorite scents are lemon, peppermint, or other citrus blends.

There are a few different options on the market to alter the scent of a space. Scent bricks that are heated to enhance the smell of a room are also an option as are reed diffusers (sticks in an oil jar) that can sit on a counter. For the least amount of clutter and to avoid spillage however, I prefer plug in diffusers for smaller spaces (bathrooms, treatment rooms, etc). Larger counter top diffusers can be very aesthetically pleasing and can create a spa vibe for the office.

Prior to COVID, I would encourage dental offices to diffuse essential oils throughout the entire office, even in treatment rooms. However, if your office has implemented the use of air purifiers in the treatment rooms, it may not make as much sense to diffuse oils that will quickly be pulled into a purifier. Instead, you could put a drop of oil on the patient bib to combat the smell of dentistry. If you are diffusing oils throughout the rest of the building, that in itself is often enough to make things much more pleasant.

- *Jessica*