



NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

COLLEGE OF
DENTAL HYGIENISTS INC.

Interim Stabilization Therapy (IST)

NLCDH Position Statement

December 2015

Interim Stabilization Therapy (IST) is a temporary restorative procedure which can arrest dental decay through a therapeutic release of fluoride, leading to remineralization of the interface layer between the dentin and the temporary cement, thereby stabilizing the tooth structure until a permanent restoration can be placed. This procedure was adopted in 2010 by the Ontario Region First Nations Inuit Health Branch to arrest disease in children in high risk communities in Northern Ontario ¹. However it may have applications in the broader population with individuals having limited access to care. The therapy's stabilizing benefits are particularly beneficial to vulnerable populations such as the elderly; those individuals with mobility challenges; those individuals living in rural or remote areas where access to dental treatment is limited or not easily accessible.

By definition, IST is meant to provide the client with temporary relief and improved tooth structure integrity until a permanent restoration can be placed by a dentist or a dental hygienist qualified in restorative procedures acting in coordination with a dentist. All clients who are treated with IST must be referred immediately to a dentist for further consultation and treatment. It is the responsibility of the dental

¹ Health Canada- First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB, Interim Stabilization Therapy Protocol), Ontario Region, 2012.

hygienist to ensure that a written referral is provided and that the client understands the importance of immediate follow up care.

The NLCDH has reviewed the NLCDH Scope of Practice² and has found that a Registered Dental Hygienists practicing in Newfoundland and Labrador would be supported in the application of Interim Stabilization Therapy.

To perform IST, dental hygienists must have completed appropriate IST specific education and comply with all NLCDH Scope of Practice and NLCDH Practice Standards³. Dental hygienists may not diagnose dental decay. However, an identification of the client's unmet needs according to the Human Needs Conceptual Model of Care⁴ supports the therapeutic intervention of IST where the unmet need of biologically sound dentition would be addressed by temporarily stabilizing the tooth.

The NLCDH does not endorse specific educational opportunities and encourages dental hygienists to exercise professional discretion in determining their competence and capability in adopting a new skill into their dental hygiene practice.

² NLCDH Scope of Practice; Implementation Competency #46, p. 3. www.nldh.com

³ NLCDH Practice Standards: Part II, Professional Responsibilities 1.1, p. 5. www.nlcdh.com

⁴ Darby ML, Walsh MM. Application of the human needs conceptual model to dental hygiene practice. Journal of Dental Hygiene, 2000 Summer; 74(3):230-7.