

OPPEARLSO

(Editor's Note: If you have a clinical or practice management Pearl to share with your colleagues, send it to JCO, 1828 Pearl St., Boulder, CO 80302. Appropriate illustrations are welcome; a photograph of the author and a copyright transfer form are required prior to publication.)

Plastic Wrap Tray Covers

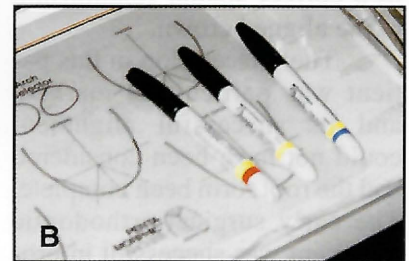
We use Reynolds Film,* which comes in two sizes, instead of paper tray covers (A). Before covering the tray, we lightly mist it with disinfectant, which provides a wet film for the plastic wrap to adhere to. The plastic wrap is impervious to liquids and is inexpensive compared to paper covers, especially when shipping costs are considered.

Permanent Marking Pens

An article by Cureton and colleagues (JCO, November 1996) proposed a system of rotating Sharpie** fine-point permanent markers for self-disinfection. We have modified this system by using three archwire markers per chair (B). The top stripe on each marker designates the chair; the red, white, or blue stripe denotes the sequence in which the markers are used. This sequence is easy to remember and ensures that a marker will not be reused for at least an hour and a half, since we allow 30 minutes for an archwire change. According to Cureton, that is adequate time for self-disinfection.

The black Sharpie marker is also used to write instructions to the chairside assistant on the tray—in particular, the time when the patient is due to be out of the chair (C). Thus, the assistant is always aware of the time left for a procedure. The marker writes easily on the Reynolds Film and is bold enough to be read from a distance.

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*Reynolds Metals Co., Richmond, VA.

**Sanford Corp., Bellwood, IL.