

Remember – each office is different! Our documents are intended as suggestions and guidelines only and can be used as a starting point for conversation and your own system development.

### STEP 1

#### PATHOLOGY

*The definition of dental pathology is the identification and management of any dental related disease. The first step to any good dental exam is completing an oral cancer screening. It is something that must always be performed by the dentist at every typical dental cleaning during the exam. During this step the dentist is checking for any 'lumps or bumps', typically that could be a sign of cancer, however any symptoms or signs of anything abnormal and unhealthy will be assessed during this step.*

### STEP 2

#### PERIO

*This middle section in the exam is all about the gums, the dentist is essentially giving a once over 'double check' and make sure that they agree with the hygienist. Dr. Hatch prefers to do the perio part of the exam second, because he says that since teeth are his specialty, he wants to make sure he gives a full examination before getting side tracked by teeth. During this step he will ask the hygienists "how do the gums look?" This is their prompt to tell the doctor what they found and what they recommend for the patient. He asks during this section of his exam so that he can ensure he agrees and can look first hand while actually being in the mouth rather than having to think back later. If the dentist disagrees or wants to suggest something different it is important to say it in a respectful way to ensure that the dentist doesn't undermine the hygienist. Dr. Hatch recommends saying something along the lines of "I see exactly what you see, but I am also worried about..." He also recommends if this does happen that the Dr. takes down the name of the patient and then follows up with the hygienist at a later time to discuss where they both were coming from and see what each other were thinking.*

### STEP 3

#### RESTORATIVE

*The final step in the exam is for the dentist to give the teeth a once over, in this step the dentist is looking for anything out of the ordinary or unhealthy in the patient's mouth. This should be the last in the exam process because it is the dentist's specialty and more often than not, favorite part. The dentist will first examine the teeth from a global view, all of the teeth together. Then they will move on to examining each tooth by itself. This is the perfect place to let the hygienist know if you need another X-Ray or intra oral picture. At this point the dentist should not feel pressured to come up with a diagnosis, they should use this time instead to collect all of their data and then go back to their office to collect their thoughts. During this time, they can come up with a treatment plan presentation. If you are in the middle of your exam or finishing up the exam and the patient insists on knowing right then if anything is wrong, let them know that you haven't been able to fully see the X-Rays and shortly after the cleaning is finished there will be a time the patient, hygienist and dr. can meet and discuss their findings.*