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A Hawley Clasp Modification

The venerable Hawley retainer has been basically unaltered in form and application since its introduction to the specialty nearly 100 years ago.¹ To add to its utility, we suggest a modification of the retentive clasping mechanism.

Although we prefer to use ball clasps rather than Adams clasps because of their sturdiness and simplicity, they are shorter and thus more difficult to adjust. To overcome this problem, we make the wire a little longer and form it into a U-bend, with a loop extending 2-3mm from the

surface of the teeth (A). The bend approaches the retentive undercut gingival to the contact point at a 90° angle (B).

There are two distinct advantages to this method:

- The clasp can easily be made tighter or looser or moved occlusally or gingivally. The smooth U-bend does not irritate the oral mucosa.
- The facial extension of the U-bend provides the patient with a sturdy finger purchase for removal of the retainer (C). This eliminates the tendency to remove the Hawley by pulling down on the labial bow, which can eventually lead to distortion. When patients are instructed to pull down on the “removing bump” formed by the U-bend, they'll do it every time thereafter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The authors appreciate the help of Dr. Sharon Nguyen in the preparation of this article.

REFERENCES

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