



Kimberly Kyd, RDH:

Dedicated to Pediatric Care and Healthy Habits

From a childhood of dental concerns to a career focused on championing children's oral health.

One wouldn't imagine that a childhood full of dental issues—high rates of caries, an impacted canine—would lead to a career in dentistry, but that's the story of Kimberly Kyd, RDH. "I was always at the dentist," she said. "My dentist worked across the street. I never had that fear... I felt very much at home at the dentist, so that's where my journey started."

Kyd understands that others do experience dental fear and she's spent her 13-year career working to help prevent it. Her first dental position was as an assistant. "I assisted an endodontist and a periodontist," she said. "I also did front desk work and took x-rays. I was a floater."

Eventually, Kyd realized that she wanted to do more. She attended hygiene school at Farmingdale State College on Long Island, NY, and now works as a hygienist for Dr. Michael King at Pediatric Dental Associates of Manhattan.

A CALL TO WORK WITH CHILDREN

Kyd's desire to work with children began during her rotation at Cohen Children's Medical Center in New Hyde Park, NY. "I saw them coming in so nervous," she recalled. "My goal was just to make them comfortable and make it a fun experience so they wouldn't have that fear at the next visit."

Kyd's own childhood experiences also played a role in her mission to care for children. "I want to promote prevention," she said. "I had so many cavities and my diet was high in sugar. I counsel parents and help them develop a plan for their children's diet because it plays such a huge role in oral and overall health."

She created a PowerPoint presentation that she shares with parents and patients to explain what a healthy diet involves, but she's never scolding or demanding. "I never tell them, 'Don't do that.' No one wants to hear that. I offer tips and suggestions."

"Kids are just so innocent," she added. "Promoting oral health at an early age really spoke to me."

Interestingly, one of Kyd's patients is now 43. "As a child, he was a patient of Dr. King's and he's just really comfortable coming here for dental care. Now he brings his kids, too. They all come in together. It's just a full circle of dentistry in that family."





EMBRACE THE CHAOS

"I'm one of five," said Kyd. "Chaos is kind of my life." And

a pediatric dental practice can involve a fair bit of chaos. Some children enter the office with lots

of excitement and energy that's challenging to get under control, while others arrive with fear and frustration that might lead to resistance. Kyd's game for all of that.

The practice sees several patients with special needs as well. "We have to be really patient with them and set small goals," Kyd explained. "Sometimes they'll come in and we'll think there's no way we'll get x-rays, and then slowly but surely we'll get them. That's just so rewarding. And those types of things are what really drives me, honestly."

Kyd recalled an 8-year-old patient with special needs who had difficulty trusting any doctor due to multiple health issues, including an airway disease. She worked patiently with the boy to help him feel comfortable in the dental chair

A Passion for the Airway

In 2020, Kyd began experiencing shortness of breath. For two years, she was told she had asthma—but that was a misdiagnosis. She actually has a rare condition called idiopathic subglottic stenosis. Treatment has involved three surgeries, the most recent of which was just a few months ago. "I'm hoping that three is the lucky charm," Kyd said.

This experience has prompted Kyd to prioritize airway assessments with her patients. "I ask patients and their parents about snoring, whether they wake up in the middle of the night, and whether they're a mouth breather," she explained. "These can be symptoms of an obstruction in the airway. I'm very passionate about the airway because it's so important to general health."

and eventually agree to have x-rays taken. "It was very rewarding to see him actually take x-rays," she said. "I've become very close to the patient's mother. She and her son attended my wedding. When I came out of the church and saw him there, it was just so sweet."

The boy's mother recently texted Kyd to share that her son got braces. "She told me, 'He would never have been able to do this if he didn't have you as a hygienist,'" Kyd said.

Dr. King described Kyd as a "phenomenal hygienist" who treats every patient with respect and kindness. "I've seen her success with difficult patients due to her calm demeanor and patience," he added.

PATIENT-CENTERED, HABIT-BUILDING CARE

Kyd firmly believes that successful dental care requires adapting to each patient's individual needs. "Everyone is different, and they all have different needs and different goals," she said. "I talk with the patients and their parents to learn more about them and how to best meet those needs and goals." Those conversations also help to relax patients and reduce any dental fears they have.

Kyd would like to see this approach to dental hygiene—and dental care in general—expanded beyond traditional dental offices to reach patients where they are. "I'm hopeful that hygienists can work autonomously in the future," she said.

Although current New York state law does not allow hygienists to work autonomously, Kyd does spend time outside the office visiting schools and daycare programs to speak with children about the importance of oral health and its connection to overall health. "I want to teach them good habits," she said, "so they can carry those habits with them for the rest of their lives."



Hygiene Favorites

Throughout her career, Kyd has relied on ACCLEAN products for comfort, efficiency, and patient satisfaction. At the top of her list is the ACCLEAN Ultrasonic Insert in Universal Slim, which she said is ideal for navigating hard-to-reach posterior areas and working around orthodontic appliances and fixed retainers.

She also praises ACCLEAN Disposable Prophylaxis Angles for their flexible cup that flares around the tooth with excellent control and no splatter. "This is by far my favorite prophylaxis angle in all 13 years of being a hygienist," she said. For polishing, the bubblegum ACCLEAN Prophylaxis Paste is a patient favorite.



Kyd also recommends ACCLEAN Kids' Flossers, noting that the floss is strong and resists fraying. "They are fun, with little animals on them, and entice kids to floss more than the traditional ones," she said.