Until recently, there have been limited over-the-counter (OTC) treatment options for improving gingival inflammation. Conventional treatments for patients with gingivitis often exhibit negative side effects (i.e., staining, unpleasant taste, etc.), making it difficult for patient compliance and for dental professionals to recommend them. Developed to deliver the next advanced over-the-counter product for treating gingivitis, Procter & Gamble introduced Crest Pro-Health [HD], a two-step system that effectively treats gingival irritation and offers a new level of clean that is noticeable by consumers.

The therapeutic ingredient is separated from the stain mitigation technology, thus each step can be individually optimized, achieving superior cleaning and effective whitening. A recent evaluation conducted by Contemporary Product Solutions solicited the opinions of 21 dental team members after they offered Crest Pro-Health [HD] in their practices. All of those that responded to the evaluation stated that they offered chlorhexidine products to their patients, with 70% of them offering chlorhexidine for periodontal therapy. However, 86% of survey respondents stated that their patients experienced a negative response to chlorhexidine because of staining, and 50% said their patients reported an unpleasant taste with use. The first step in Crest Pro-Health [HD] is an anti-plaque and anti-gingivitis dentifrice with stabilized stannous fluoride. This first step delivers optimized antibacterial activity because the stannous fluoride is highly bioavailable.

The anti-bacterial mechanism-of-action of stannous fluoride is not the same as other anti-bacterial agents (e.g., Triclosan). Triclosan’s mechanism-of-action is killing bacteria, and although stannous fluoride does kill bacteria, its main mechanism-of-action is interfering with the metabolic activities of bacteria. This in turn leads to a reduction in bacteria proliferation.

Of those surveyed, 75% of respondents said that patients refused fluoride application because of financial reasons. With Crest Pro-Health [HD], patients receive daily fluoride within the first step of application. After use, the majority of studies evaluating Crest Pro-Health [HD] showed a greater than 30% plaque reduction and significant improvement in gingival bleeding in as little as one week. Because of the enhanced anti-bacterial efficacy, users also notice a significant breath freshness. All of the dental professionals who responded to the evaluation agreed that a product with fluoride, with comparable anti-gingivitis efficacy to chlorhexidine rinse, and whitening capabilities would be a valuable treatment for their patients.

Photographs courtesy of Greenbrier Dental Center, Chesapeake, Virginia.
The first step of the Crest Pro Health HD is a dentrifice, the second step in Crest Pro-Health [HD] is a 3% hydrogen peroxide whitening gel. By separating the two components improves the efficacy of the fluoride and whitening steps, respectively. Because P&G separated the stain mitigation efficacy into Step 2, the stabilized stannous fluoride in Step 1 became more bioavailable.

As such, the well documented anti-microbial efficacy of SnF2 is enhanced. This led to the greatly increased anti-plaque and anti-gingivitis efficacy as confirmed by the various studies. The key study is the one comparing with Chlorhexidine, showing it has the same anti-gingivitis efficacy as CHX. due to the enhanced anti-microbial efficacy, users also notice significant breath freshness.

One of those who completed the evaluation, Phillip Talley, DDS, from Atlanta, Georgia, offered Crest Pro-Health [HD] in his practice and said, “My patients really loved it because they noticed that they had significantly whiter teeth.” Sharde Woods, RDH, from Chicago, Illinois, used it herself and said, “I love the taste and how clean my teeth feel. I truly feel like after using Crest Pro-Health [HD] my teeth are whiter, too.”

Dental professionals use a variety of products and methods (i.e., in-office, at-home, and over-the-counter) for maintaining whitening treatments. Of those who responded to the evaluation, 92% stated that they recommended at-home whitening products as the follow-up regimen for patients who want to maintain the color they achieved from whitening. With Crest Pro-Health [HD], dental professionals can provide a product that can maintain and enhance whitening, while improving oral health. One evaluator did comment that they would like the whitening consistency to be thicker only because it seemed to run through down into their toothbrush and felt the need to use more than normal.

After 30-days of Crest Pro-Health [HD] use, 85% of evaluators noticed a change (i.e., healthier gums, whiter teeth, less plaque, etc.) in their patients. Allison Williams, RDH in Chesapeake, Virginia, said, “We offered Crest Pro-Health [HD] to two periodontal patients. After 20 days of use, their bleeding scores decreased significantly.” Christie Mikolajczyk, CDA, EDDA, from Bowling Green, Kentucky, stated, “After using Crest Pro-Health [HD], everyone, including myself, found that their teeth felt incredibly clean after just one use.”

Another evaluator who used it herself, Rachel Smith, RDH, from Plano, Texas, found that, “In addition to the superior cleaning and excellent whitening, I am also in Invisalign aligners, and I feel like Crest Pro-Health [HD] is a great adjunct in my challenges to keep my own mouth healthy and fresh.” Additionally, 92% of survey respondents recommend this product for patients in Invisalign. The evaluators also recommended Crest Pro-Health [HD] for whitening maintenance, periodontal patients, high caries risk management, and patients who are sensitive to take-home trays.

Despite the higher price point, 80% of evaluation respondents said that the price is acceptable because of the breakthrough nature of the product. All of respondents agreed that the cost of Crest Pro-Health [HD] was not a barrier to purchasing the product for their practice. After offering Crest Pro-Health [HD] to their patients, 70% of dental team member respondents found that a healthier smile was the number one benefit from using this product.

Conclusion
Patient acceptance, compliance, and results can be difficult to obtain with the variety of OTC products available. With Crest Pro-Health [HD] patients receive effective plaque removal, gingival health benefits, and excellent whitening results all in one package. The unique two-step system improves the efficacy of both components, maximizing the oral health results that can be achieved. Overall, evaluators rated Crest Pro-Health [HD] a 4 on the 5-point diamond scale.