DENTAL DEPOSITS AND STAINS
Why polish?

• The purpose of polishing is to remove stains from teeth,
• “Plaque” is also removed when polishing, but the patient should be taught to remove plaque because it begins to form again immediately after a professional polishing.
The Pellicle

- A sticky, invisible substance called the “pellicle” immediately begins to attach to a freshly polished tooth.
- It can only be seen if a disclosing agent is used but you can feel it.
- Slide your tongue over your teeth. Feel that slick feeling? That is the “pellicle”.
The Pellicle

• The pellicle comes from a saliva component called “glycoprotein”.

• Within hours after the pellicle forms, bacteria begin attaching to it. In a day’s time, millions of bacteria will grow in a colony in the pellicle.

• It is this bacteria that causes dental caries and periodontal diseases.
Plaque

• The colony of bacteria along with the pellicle is called plaque, or “dental biofilm”
• If plaque is disturbed (brushed away) when it begins to form, it does not mature and cannot cause disease.
• Teaching a patient to brush is important so plaque cannot cause its damage.
Calculus

- Minerals including calcium and phosphorus also get deposited in plaque.
- These minerals grow and eventually form calculus (tartar).
- If, while polishing, you notice the presence of calculus, ask the dentist or hygienist to remove it.
Materia Alba

- Materia alba is white material on the teeth that contains food particles
- It is not plaque
- The presence of materia alba indicates the patient needs some serious dental education!
Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Stains

- Intrinsic stains are incorporated into tooth structure and cannot be removed with polishing.

- Extrinsic stains are on the surface of the tooth and can be removed with polishing.
Patient Education

• If patients have an intrinsic stain, be sure to explain their stain cannot be removed with polishing.
Intrinsic Stains

Unexplained staining (the patient said the teeth came in this way)

Stained teeth caused by a blood disorder
Intrinsic Stains

Devital tooth- the tooth was injured and the nerve died

There was too much fluoride in the water causing this condition called fluorosis
Intrinsic Stains

White spots caused by poorly calcified enamel.

Tetracycline stain caused by antibiotics taken while the teeth were developing.
Extrinsic Stains
(on the tooth’s outer surface)

Yellow stain is caused by poor brushing - it is stained plaque

Brown stain is caused by smoking, Cola drinks, coffee and/or tea.
Extrinsic stains

• Black line stain is the hardest extrinsic stain to remove because it is stained calculus.
• Ask your dentist or hygienist to remove it with a scaler
Green Stain

- Green stain is a sign of poor oral hygiene
- Green stain is extrinsic but it can become embedded in enamel becoming intrinsic
- Enamel under green stain is usually decalcified and will flake off when you polish, so..
- Alert your dentist that the patient has green stain before removing it.
Extrinsic Stain

• The granddaddy of all stains – betal nut stain cause by chewing this Indonesian nut.
• It is sold as a stimulant.