



Successful implementation of the CariFree system hinges on patients feeling included in the process. Starting the conversation with the Caries Risk Assessment Form is a great way to engage the patient and bring them into the conversation so they can make more informed decisions about their health.

1. When a new patient comes to check-in; the team members at the front present the CRA Form and say: *"Dr. Smith would like you to fill out this CRA Form prior to seeing you in the appointment. Please fill out the top section only, and your dental professional will discuss these items with you during your appointment."*
  - a. Since the patient is coming into the operator with the form, it will serve as a conversation ice breaker. You don't have to start from nothing, you have a platform to begin the conversation.
2. When the patient comes in to the operator, say: *"Thank you for filling out the Risk Assessment Form. This form will allow us to determine your risk of getting cavities in the future. Knowing your risk helps us make the best recommendations to ensure the restorative work (fillings, crowns, etc.) we do lasts. It also helps us understand why you are experiencing cavities in the first place and how to prevent them in the future"* (if they have cavities).

Or, you can say: *"We know that everyone's risk for getting cavities changes due to things like diet, medication use, or something as small and seemingly insignificant as your age, which can all affect the environment in your mouth. Knowing your risk can be helpful when you are making lifestyle choices."*

- a. The Patient Education Guide can serve as a good visual aid for discussing how certain things put us at risk, and others protect us.
3. When you are working with the CRA Form, say something like: *"It looks like your risk factors include \_\_\_\_\_. These are the things we know can put you at risk for getting cavities in the next year, and if there is anything we can change here, we know it is the cheapest way to lower your risk. Sometimes we can't change anything, or we don't want to, so there are other things we can do to help, which we will discuss."*
4. Complete the bottom portion of the CRA form and once you find the patient's risk level, say: *"Based on the form, it looks like your risk factors and history of decay tell us you are \_\_\_\_\_ (low, moderate or high) risk. The good news is, we can lower your risk if you would like; are you interested in talking about what the recommendations are for your risk level?"* If yes, hand them the Product Recommendation Guide. If no, say: *"That's okay. If you change your mind at any point, just let me know!"*

5. While the patient is looking at the Guide: *“There are a few options we have when talking about lowering our risk. First, as I mentioned, the cheapest way is always changing any behaviors we can.”* That might include things like assessing drinks – are they acidic in nature or being consumed over long periods of time? Recommend they cut back or focus on consuming their coffee with breakfast, soda with lunch, wine with dinner, and only drinking tap water in between meals.
  
6. If behavior change is not an option, or if they don’t want to give up their routine, let the patient know that you would recommend going on some professional strength products. These products will get rid of the bad bacteria in their mouth and promote the good, healthy bacteria. The 3 components that make this possible are; pH neutralization in all the CariFree products, nano hydroxyapatite in the Gel, and sodium hypochlorite in the Treatment Rinse. Here’s further explanation of how each component contributes to getting patients healthy –
  - a. *“The pH neutralization component is the main factor that sets the CariFree products apart from most other products on the market. All of them range in pH from 8-11, so they are above neutral. This helps neutralize the acids present in your mouth and creates an environment where the healthy bacteria can thrive.”*
  
  - b. *“The next component is sodium hypochlorite. This one is included in the Treatment Rinse and will help kill the bad bacteria that cause cavities. This, along with raising the pH, allows your mouth to select for the healthy bacteria to come back and repopulate on your teeth. The good news is, this rinse is only short term.”*
  
  - c. *“The last component, nano hydroxyapatite, is one that promotes strong and healthy teeth. This component is included in the CariFree Gel. It is unique because the form of mineral being used is the same as what our teeth are made up of and what our body naturally produces. By supplying nano HA in the crystalline form, the tooth can immediately absorb it to remineralize any early areas of decay that we don’t want to restore yet.”*
  
7. Next, discuss treatment time and the financial aspect with the patient if they haven’t already asked you about it. *“On average, high risk patients need to go on 3-6 months of treatment. Because of the current cavities you have and your risk factors, we anticipate you will need 2 rounds of treatment – the equivalent of 6 months. The cost per round is \$150 so that means the full treatment will cost about \$300. Keep in mind, the goal of this system is to get you as close to cavity-free as possible, so you don’t continue experiencing decay in the future. This will*



*save you money in the long term as these products are much less expensive than the cost of restorative work."*

8. Ask, "Would you like to try the treatment products?" If no, do not worry; just let them know you will continue to assess them at each appointment to make sure you are keeping track of their risk. If yes, great! Be sure to show them the instructions so they know when and how to use the products.

The number one way to be successful with the program is to offer it to a wide range of risk levels, and always make it their choice; people naturally resist new things if it is forced on them. Don't be disappointed if patients say no to therapy the first time they see it, sometimes it takes digesting. Always send them home with the CRA Form and patient brochure as a resource.