Research over the years shows that there is a strong link between tobacco use and periodontal disease. The effects of smoking and smokeless tobacco can be very destructive to the user’s oral health and overall health. Dental hygienists have a strong influence on the patient and have the ability to inform them of the detrimental effects of tobacco use. In addition to the education from the dental hygienist, therapists can reiterate the information and help the user figure out how they can quit. Figuring out how to quit starts with finding out why the person uses tobacco. This is important to quitting because a specific plan needs to be made for the individual patient so they can be successful in quitting. Using quitlines has been successful in the past and is useful for hygienists to refer the patient to.

Because a large number of tobacco users are college students, it is important to keep this in mind. According to the article “Association of smokeless tobacco use and smoking in adolescents in the United States”, young adolescents are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including smoking. College students pick up the bad habit due to stress from school and the need to fit in when socializing. This fact plays an important factor in the dental hygienist’s treatment plan because he or she will have to consider this mindset when suggesting ways to quit.

The effects of tobacco use on the periodontal health are very detrimental. Effects can include, but are not limited to, lowered neutrophil and interleukin counts, and increased CD3 and CD4 T cells, according to Hanioka and Ojima.