



# GC - Completing the picture of Minimum Intervention

Minimum Intervention or MI, is the modern 'medical' approach to managing caries.

Its principles are very simple. **Identify** and assess any potential caries risk factors early. Eliminate or minimise these risk factors in order to help **prevent** caries from occurring. And if surgical repair is required, as much as possible of the tooth structure is conserved, whilst bioactive materials are used to **restore** the tooth which help to reform demineralised enamel and protect against further damage. In contrast, the traditional 'surgical' approach of 'drilling and filling' only treats the symptoms of the disease not the cause and there is little to no emphasis on prevention.

To implement Minimum Intervention effectively, all three elements need to be integrated fully into your patient treatment plans. Let's consider each of the principles in more detail.



## A vision of the future

As our understanding of caries disease and management improves, dentistry is shifting from the surgical to the medical MI approach. Within a few years, surgical restoration of caries may be the last course of treatment rather than the first. It's quite possible that one day many dental practices might be designated as 'Minimum Intervention' practices. Thanks to their emphasis on identification and prevention, and the caring 'dentist-patient' relationship this tends to foster, more patients should be attracted to the MI approach. Specifically patients who prefer and are willing to undergo regular tests and simple preventive procedures against caries rather than face frequent surgical intervention. Indeed, caries prevention rather than surgical intervention may become a major income stream in the future.

