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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 year	(6 issues)	\$129
3 years	(18 issues)	\$319



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“Evolution in the air, and changes, they are a comin’”

With apologies to Bob Dylan, change has indeed come. That stalwart standard of implant overdentures, the Locator® by ZEST Anchors, is changing. Now, before people take to the streets, allow me to explain that this is evolution, carefully preserving the traits that make the Locator a worldwide success while selecting away baggage that inevitably accumulates around a status quo.

The Locator has been the undisputed champ of overdenture anchors with a dominant share of the world market. Fourteen years ago, attachment selection was typically limited to complex designs or alternatives exclusive to implant systems, and frustration was common when replacement of parts was complicated and time-consuming. ZEST solved these shortcomings by providing an abutment to fit almost any implant system, by increasing the wear resistance of the replaceable member, and by making that insert replacement quick and easy. Reduced time required to replace worn inserts allowed dentists to reduce their maintenance fees. As popularity of the system grew, the network of dentists expanded, so patients could find a “Locator dentist” almost anywhere.

The same: The general functionality of the system and processing techniques remain unchanged: The new Locator, or Locator® R-Tx™ as it is named, is still a titanium abutment that fits directly to dental implants, and yes, it has a nylon retentive insert to retain a dental prosthesis. The inserts are again offered in graduated retention distinguishable by their colors, and they can be easily removed and replaced with a simple, hand-held tool. The insert is imbedded into a metal housing as before, which is processed into the dental prosthesis either in the dental laboratory or chairside; capture of the attachment apparatus is unchanged, including the use of a block-out spacer.

What's new: The first thing you notice is the all-in-one packaging that includes the abutment as well as all the processing components. The abutment is shaped differently than its predecessor, with a stepped, conical form — making insertion by the patient easier than before. It has dual exterior retention features and is delivered with a .050"/1.25 mm hex driver rather than a specific insertion tool, making it much more convenient for dentists and surgeons to remove, replace, or tighten the Locator R-Tx, as most healing abutments require the same driver. The new abutment is no longer golden, but rather a pinkish-bronze; this is not an esthetic nuance, but rather the color of the new, harder titanium carbon nitride coating used in the Locator R-Tx that promises to be much more resistant to abrasion. The new nylon inserts are fewer in choices than the legacy as there is no longer a need for the center-male portion; therefore, all nylon couplings are similar to the Extended Range Males, reducing redundant inventory. The metal housing is pink, allowing it to camouflage within the denture resin color — a nice feature. It also sports flats on the side to keep from rotating in the prosthesis. The new housing allows the nylon insert to pivot up to 30 degrees per implant, without a loss of retention. This should be particularly helpful with angled implant placement or in reducing the fulcrum effect when more than two abutments are employed.

The take-away: The Locator R-Tx is a thoughtfully designed and carefully planned improvement of The Standard in implant overdentures. Where the Locator was limited, the Locator R-Tx is configured to provide solutions with easier delivery by the dentist to the patient, greater pivoting of the inserts, reduced wear, and simpler parts inventory. Change brings uncertainty, but my early experience has been overwhelmingly positive as the system is easy to use and delivers on performance for the patient. So, “Don’t stand in the doorway; don’t block up the hall,” because “Locators they are a changin’.” Say hello to Locator R-Tx.



Mark Montana, DDS

Mark Montana, DDS, is a 1987 graduate of the University of Southern California (USC) School of Dentistry and completed his Certification in Advanced Prosthodontics at USC in 1989. He has been primarily involved in private practice in Tempe, Arizona, emphasizing fixed, removable, and implant prosthodontics. Dr. Montana has been involved in clinical instruction while attending USC and as a preclinical instructor at the Arizona School of Dentistry. He has lectured domestically and internationally on the topics of implant, fixed, and removable prosthodontics. He has served on several of his state's dental committees. Dr. Montana's memberships to professional organizations include the American College of Prosthodontists, the Academy of Osseointegration, the Academy of Fixed Prosthodontics, the Pacific Coast Society for Prosthodontics, and the American and Arizona Dental Associations.