What if there was 1 bonding agent that replaces all others you use in any etch method you prefer?” I typically pose that question to the audience at the beginning of any program I give when discussing universal bonding agents and their ability to provide great bond strengths to almost any material. 3M ESPE’s Scotchbond Universal Adhesive is one of those bonding agents.

Self-, Total-, and Selective-Etch in 1 Bottle

For direct restorations, 3M ESPE’s Scotchbond Universal adhesive yields very high bond strengths in all 3 etching modes: self, total, or selective. It shares a chemical history with other 3M ESPE systems, so bond strengths to cut enamel and to dentin are very high.

The developers of 3M ESPE Scotchbond Universal adhesive optimized the ratios of 3 ingredients: 3M ESPE’s Vitrebond Copolymer, HEMA, and water. This rehydrates the collagen network if the dentin is over-dried and forms a hybrid layer regardless of the level of wetness. The result is consistent bonding without sensitivity and less worry about what is “too wet or too dry.”

Indirect Bonding Simplified

I can successfully use 3M ESPE Scotchbond Universal adhesive as a bonding agent/primer for any of today’s indirect materials. It has a very low (10 µm) film thickness and virtually no sensitivity. Its ethanol-water based formula contains a proven acidic monomer primer that provides high bond strengths to aluminum oxide, sand-blasted zirconia, and other metals. 3M ESPE Scotchbond Universal adhesive also contains an active silane primer for glass ceramics such as lithium disilicate—no more separate zirconia primers or silane bottles.

For maximum adhesion with zirconia restorations, we lightly sandblast the bonding surface with aluminum oxide, apply 3M ESPE Scotchbond Universal adhesive, and air thin with no light curing. On the tooth, we clean the preparation, apply adhesive in several layers, air thin, place the restoration with a resin cement, clean up, and cure just as we did with zirconia.

Universally Excellent

Its cool new bottle has an easy open/close flip-top cap and a special nozzle for 1-drop, no-mess dispensing that the assistants really like. Individual unit doses are also available, as is a dual-cure activator.

I have found—and this is backed up by clinical and lab studies—that Scotchbond Universal adhesive provides reliably high bond strengths to a variety of surfaces while ending much of the confusion surrounding dentin bonding. Whether we etch or not, leave wet or dry, or bond to enamel or dentin, the bond strengths are high.