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Infection Control

MEDIA RELEASE

ADOHTA strongly supports the principles of infection control and recommends members adhere to the relevant guidelines, policies and standards as required for their professional registration and the provision of safe and quality healthcare. Properly implemented infection control measures prevent the transmission of pathogens including bacteria, viruses and fungi through cross infection, therefore avoiding potential risk to clients, practitioners and staff.

BACKGROUND

ADOHTA adopts the 'Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare' principles endorsed by the NHMRC as a baseline.

ADOHTA recommends that members are familiar with all Dental Board of Australia policies and guidelines, including those that pertain to infection control. When applying for Board registration or renewal, practitioners are required to declare awareness of their infection status for blood-borne viruses and affirm that they will comply with the 'Guidelines on Infection Control'.

ADOHTA recommends that its members adopt the guidelines for the processing of equipment and cleaning of the surgery environment as endorsed by the Australian/New Zealand Standards¹. A list of relevant standards is included in the 'References and Resources'.

ADOHTA will continue to review information, literature and practices in Infection Control as a primary issue and encourages its members to participate in regular Infection Control professional development activities to ensure they are fully versed with the latest information.


FURTHER INFORMATION

ADOHTA supports the implementation of standard precautions measures as the minimum requirements that must be used for every client in all clinical situations, as all blood and body fluids/substances are potentially infectious.

Standard precautions in the oral health care setting includes:

- Appropriate hand hygiene before and after all patient contact
- Uniforms / clinic clothing and personal hygiene
- Use of personal protective equipment which may include gloves, impermeable gowns, plastic aprons, masks, face shields and eye protection, covered footwear)
- Immunisation/ vaccination of oral health care workers
- Appropriate sterilization practices for reprocessing of reusable instruments and equipment

¹ <http://www.standards.org.au>

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- Correct storage of items, instruments and equipment
- Safe sharps use and disposal
- Routine environmental cleaning to limit pathogen contamination of surfaces
- Clear zoning of designated 'clean' and 'contaminated' workspaces
- The use of aseptic "non-touch" technique for all invasive procedures, including appropriate use of skin disinfectants
- Appropriate waste management, especially for contaminated waste
- Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- Appropriate handling of used linen.


Transmission based precautions should be used for patients affected by known or suspected infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, measles, H5N1 avian influenza and SARS, whereby standard precautions alone are not sufficient. These precautions need to be specific to the infectious agent concerned and may encompass a range of measures to prevent airborne, droplet and/or contact transmission.

Practitioners must know their infectious status for blood-borne viruses. If affected by a blood-borne virus, registered dental practitioners must comply with the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) 'Australian National Guidelines for the Management of Health Care Workers known to be infected with a Blood-borne Viruses' as required by the Dental Board of Australia. If a practitioner suspects they may have become infected, they should be supported to seek medical advice and treatment, and in any relevant modifications to their clinical practice as required by the Dental Board or CDNA.

It is a legal requirement for employers to provide safe work environments, which includes providing staff the resources and regular training to implement infection control measures effectively.

Proper documentation for infection control is vital, it allows health organizations a means to monitor and report on compliance and follow up on any breaches or incidents. Documentation should include records on staff immunization/vaccination and allergy, restrictions to clinical practice due to bloodborne viruses, incident and accidents including sharps/ exposure incidents, sterilization equipment performance tests, instrument processing documentation, equipment maintenance and validation, environmental cleaning and waste management.

Infection control forms a significant part of the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS) Standard 3: Preventing and Controlling Healthcare- Associated Infection, which dental organisations are required to meet to be an 'accredited' health service.

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REFERENCES AND FURTHER RESOURCES

Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare, NHMRC (2010)

- <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/html-australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2010>

Dental Guidelines on Infection Control, Dental Board of Australia (2010)

- <https://www.dentalboard.gov.au/codes-guidelines/policies-codes-guidelines.aspx>

Guidelines for Infection Control, 3rd Edition, Australia Dental Association (2015)

- https://www.ada.org.au/Dental-Professionals/Publications/Infection-Control/Guidelines-for-Infection-Control/1ADA_GuidelinesforInfectionControl_3

Australian national guidelines for the management of healthcare workers living with blood borne viruses and healthcare workers who perform exposure prone procedures at risk of exposure to blood borne viruses, Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) (2018)

- [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/36D4D796D31081EBCA257BF0001DE6B7/\\$File/nat-guidelines-work-bbv.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/36D4D796D31081EBCA257BF0001DE6B7/$File/nat-guidelines-work-bbv.pdf)

The Australian Immunisation Handbook, 10th Edition, Australian Government Department of Health (2013)

- <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/>

Infection control policy statement, FDI

- <https://www.fdiworlddental.org/resources/policy-statements-and-resolutions/infection-control-in-dental-practice>

NSQHS standards


- <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/assessment-to-the-nsqhs-standards/information-for-dental-practices/>
- <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/healthcare-associated-infection/infection-control-signage/>

Hand Hygiene Australia

- <https://www.hha.org.au/>

State WHS/OH&S acts, regulations and codes of practice

- <https://www.business.gov.au/risk-management/health-and-safety/whs-oh-and-s-acts-regulations-and-codes-of-practice>

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Federation of Sterilizing Research and Advisory Councils of Australia

- <http://www.fsraca.org.au/>

Australasian College of Infection Prevention and Control Ltd

- <http://www.acipc.org.au/>

STANDARDS RELEVANT TO INFECTION CONTROL

Information on the Australian/New Zealand Standards available at Standards Australia.

<http://www.standards.org.au>

Standard number (AS/NZS)	Title
1337.1	Personal eye protection - Eye and face protectors for occupational applications
1410	Sterilisers – Steam – Pre-vacuum
1079.1 to 1079.5	Packaging of items (sterile) for patient care
2182	Sterilisers – Steam – Benchtop
2192	Sterilisers – Steam – Downward displacement
2487	Dry heat sterilisers
2514	Drying cabinets for medical equipment
2773.1	Ultrasonic cleaners for health care facilities - Non-portable
2773.2	Ultrasonic cleaners for health care facilities (Benchtop)
2945	Batch-type washer/disinfectors for health care facilities
3789.2	Textiles for health care facilities and institutions - Theatre linen and pre-packs
3816	Rack conveyor washers for health care facilities
4011.1	Single-use examination gloves – Specification
4031	Non-reusable containers for the collection of sharp medical items used in health care areas
4179	Single-use medical examination gloves - Specification for gloves made from rubber latex or rubber solution
4187	Reprocessing of reusable medical devices in health service organizations
4261	Reusable containers for the collection of sharp items used in human and animal medical applications
4381	Single-use face masks for use in health care
4815	Office-based health care facilities - Reprocessing of reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of the associated environment