

10 STEPS TO FIGHT CROSS CONTAMINATION IN THE DENTAL PRACTICE



 These are some easy ways to improve standards of hygiene and disinfection control in your clinic

1. Regularly clean floors and surfaces of non-clinical areas with a good detergent and if possible, have an allocated person to do this at regular intervals. All floors and surfaces (even non-technical), door handles and bathrooms should also be cleaned with an antiviral, antifungal and bactericidal and always remember to wash top down. Meaning high surfaces first, before the floor.

4. All delivery packages (UPS/DHL, laboratory work, etc) should be disinfected and wiped down prior to entering the clean zone. Both the outer box that was being transported and later the inner packaging too. This is particularly important for laboratory work, it is the responsibility of the dentists to disinfect all work going out to dental laboratories.

7. Clinical staff should wear appropriate safety equipment such as gowns, hair coverings, goggles/visors and masks for all treatment - FFP2/FFP3 masks are best practice. This safety protection equipment should also be made available to all patients prior to entering treatment area and disposed of, safely, after use.

10. All rooms will be aired regularly and disinfectant ambient aerosols used in between patients to allow for the air to be purified/disinfection. If possible, air filtration using appropriate HEPA filters, should be installed. We also recommend any systems that can help improve air sanitization's. Likewise, it is important to make sure work returning has been treated accordingly to protect the staff at the laboratory. We highly recommend investing in regular cleaning of air filters, air conditioner systems as well as the use of air sanitization technologies, such as ozone, uv, etc.

2. All staff must wash hands regularly for at least 20 secs. This should be done after toilet breaks, coffee breaks and at set intervals. Posters should be placed near each hand basin advising best hand washing practice and training with regular reinforcement detailing this should happen.

5. Each treatment room should be appropriately disinfected after being tidied in between appointments. A minimum of 10 minutes turn around time should be respected to allow for the bactericide/fungicide/virucide effect of cleaning materials. A clinic can see as many patients a day as it sees fit but will always guarantee that this disinfection time interval is respected, even if an appointment is only 5 minutes long. (When in a pandemic state, like Covid-19 brought us, this rule should be complemented with more guidelines provided by WHO and similars)

8. Antimicrobial mouthwash as well as hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂ - for 1 minute) should be used by the patient prior to treatment.

3. There should be a clean zone in every clinic where only dental/medical staff with properly disinfected clothes and shoes can access. All non-dental/medical people should wear special shoe protection in these areas. These include patients, caretakers, children, delivery and technical personnel. Clothes, including shoes, used in the clinic should not be allowed to go outside and should be washed with high temperatures regularly. Hand sanitizers with the appropriate liquid should be made available at the entrance to the practice, and also of each one operatory room, at the reception, at the bathrooms and staff quarters.

6. Reception should avoid shaking hands with arriving patients and they should respectfully be requested to wash hands immediately upon entering the practice as well using the available hand sanitizer after. Also opt for a welcome greeting instead of a handshake. In some countries a customary kiss is given. This should be avoided and staff should respect this too. Management commit to sending all staff members with any flu symptoms home and regularly measures staff temperatures.

9. It is very important that procedures that create aerosols, that high speed aspiration will always be ensured by a dental assistant, and not done alone, to help reduce aerosol production during specific aerosol generating procedures such as cleanings, restorative dentistry, endodontics and others, alongside the use of a rubber dam.

Common Areas.

Waiting rooms should not have magazines or books.
Avoid sophisticated furniture to allow sanitization.
Patients should maintain social distancing.
Avoid to having too much people in common areas.
Non-essential people are not allowed in and must wait outside till patient is finished.
Does not apply to children and the handicapped, after appropriate measure to assure protection are taken.

EXTRA. Patients should respectfully understand:

Always shower before coming to the dentist
Not to wear too much jewelry
If you appear to be sweating, we can refuse treatment

We can measure your temperature and refuse treatment
Runny nose or cough please don't come to the clinic.
That a clinic can ask for a valid covid-19 test prior to treatment.

