

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Guidelines Frequently Asked Questions

The relevant pages of the IPAC Guidelines are listed for convenience.

Q1. Why has the College implemented these Guidelines? I've been in practice for years and never had any problems with infection control.

Protection of the public is better served by putting standards into place proactively rather than having to react in the event of an infection control incident.

These Guidelines reflect current knowledge of the transmission of infection, and how to prevent and control it, as well as the expectations of the public and government. Wherever possible, the recommendations are based on data from well-designed scientific studies. In the absence of scientific evidence, certain recommendations are based on strong theoretical rationale, suggestive evidence or opinions of respected authorities. Some requirements are provincially and federally legislated.

The Guidelines are a living document that will be updated as necessary. Dentists and CDAs are expected to continue to use their professional judgment in implementing them.

Q2. When do the Guidelines take effect?

The IPAC Guidelines were approved by the CDSBC Board at its May meeting and went into effect immediately. All dentists and CDAs will receive a copy of the Guidelines in late July. The College expects that all dental offices will implement them as soon as reasonably possible.

Q3. Do I have to build a new sterilization centre in my office?

No. You may need to reorganize your sterilization area to facilitate organization and processing, i.e. with clear separation of clean and dirty areas with separate sections for receiving, cleaning and decontamination; preparation and packaging; sterilization; drying/cooling; and storage (p.24).

Q4. Do I need to buy a new sterilizer to meet the Guidelines?

Equipment that is used to clean, disinfect or sterilize (e.g., ultrasonic washers, washer-disinfectors, sterilizers) must meet standards established by Health Canada. If your current sterilizer does not meet the time, temperature and other operating parameters recommended by the manufacturer of the sterilizer, you will need to have your sterilizer repaired or replaced (p.24). If you are replacing your sterilizer, we recommend purchasing one with current features such as recording devices that print out cycle time, temperature and pressure (p.29).

Note: If you are using a vapo-sterilizer/chemi-clave sterilizer, there are stringent air quality controls for exposure to biological and chemical agents made under the Workers Compensation Act. See p.24 in the Guidelines for more information.



Q5. Manufacturers have told me that I have to buy a certain type of equipment. Does the College recommend specific equipment or products for infection control?

CDSBC does not promote or endorse any specific infection control products, equipment or manufacturers. The College recommends purchasing equipment and products that will enable dentists and CDAs to meet the requirements of the IPAC Guidelines.

Q6. What do I do now that spore tests (BIs) must be performed at least once a week for each sterilizer used? UBC is no longer offering a spore testing service.

There are different options available for implementing this requirement. You can purchase your own biological monitoring system, there are commercial sterilization monitoring companies that provide this service, and there are services provided by various dental sundries suppliers that may be utilized.

Q7. Do I have to use safety-engineered needles in my practice?

Not unless your professional judgment determines that it is clinically appropriate to use a safety-engineered needle in a particular circumstance. The College's position is based on the WorkSafeBC report "*Preventing Needle-stick Injuries and the Use of Dental Safety Syringes*" (2010), which found that additional design modifications are required prior to recommending universal use of currently available models of safety-engineered syringes/needles (p.19 of the Guidelines and www.worksafebc.com/contact_us/research/research_results/res_60_10_1080.asp.)

Q8. I buy multi-packs of burs, temporary crown forms, matrices, etc. Do I have to individually package and sterilize them?

As with many things in the IPAC Guidelines, you must use your professional judgment. The Guidelines state that if a product is received from the manufacturer who has guaranteed the instrument's sterility, it need not be sterilized prior to initial use. Newly purchased non-sterile critical and semi-critical items must be inspected and processed according to manufacturer's instructions prior to use. Any product that comes in a clean state that the manufacturer indicates is ready for use does not need to be sterilized provided that it is used directly from the new package (p.24).

Q9. I often see people wearing scrubs on the street. Why do CDSBC's IPAC Guidelines state that dental staff should not wear their uniforms or scrubs outside of the dental office?

CDSBC's mandate is protection of the public, and these Guidelines promote protection of both the public and dental health care providers. Spatter or spray from dental procedures can contaminate the fabric of scrubs/uniforms and lab coats, and can lead to cloth-borne transmission of pathogens to people and surfaces. It is the dentist's responsibility to develop a policy that uniforms and scrubs worn during patient care procedures should **not** be worn outside the dental office (p.20).