

Infection Prevention and Control Policy

Statement of intent

This policy should be read in conjunction with Infection Prevention Procedures and the Health and Safety Manual. For the safety of our patients, visitors and team this practice follows the latest guidelines and research on infection prevention. We comply with the 'essential quality requirements' from the Department of Health and have a written assessment and plan to move towards 'best practice'. We take Universal Precautions for all patients, to minimise all of the known and unknown risks of cross infection.

Decontamination

We follow the latest decontamination guidelines from the Department of Health for new and used instruments. Stored instruments are protected against recontamination. The treatment rooms and all equipment are decontaminated appropriately between patients and at the end of every clinical session. Defects found during the cleaning of equipment are immediately reported to the Senior Nurse. This practice meets the Essential Quality Requirements of the Department of Health Guidelines on infection prevention and control HTM 01-05.

Immunisation

Staff involved in decontamination and clinical work have evidence of current immunisation for Hepatitis B and the practice also has evidence of other required vaccination sero-conversion results.

Items sent to the laboratory and equipment sent for repair

All items despatched to the laboratory are washed and disinfected after removal from the mouth and items received from the laboratory are washed and disinfected prior to fitting. The disinfection solutions used are appropriate for this purpose and separate decontamination baths are used. Equipment is decontaminated before being sent for repair and all laboratory sheets are labelled accordingly.

Instruments

Whenever possible we utilise single-use instruments, which are always disposed of after use on a patient. Single use items are never reused. Where instruments are reprocessed the practice ensures that the full decontamination procedure (found in the decontamination policy on the desktop) is adhered to at all times.

Inoculation injury

To minimise the risk of blood borne viruses all staff are trained in avoidance and management of an inoculation injury. Needle blocks are used in all clinical surgeries and a risk assessment has

been carried out. Post Exposure Prophylaxis is available if necessary. Staff at risk of blood borne virus exposure have the opportunity to be referred to occupational health for an examination.

Legionella control

The practice takes all reasonable measures to minimise the risk of exposure of staff, patients and visitors to legionella in accordance with existing guidance. The practice carries out regular legionella risk assessments, water tests and audits. Flushing of hot and cold water outlets is routinely undertaken by the practice. Records of all legionella control activities are maintained and reviewed annually.

Personal hygiene

All staff maintain a high standard of personal hygiene including hand hygiene and follow recommended techniques. Restricted wearing of jewellery is a practice requirement, and clean clinical clothing is also essential.

Personal Protective Equipment

All team members follow the guidelines for personal protective equipment in the infection prevention procedures. These include masks, gloves, protective eyewear, clinical attire and suitable shoes.

Spillage

Clinical staff are trained in how to manage an accidental spillage of a hazardous substance and how to follow our emergency arrangements. The practice has a mercury spillage kit and a bodily fluid spillage kit which are checked regularly.

Waste

Waste is carefully handled and disposed of by appropriate carriers according to current regulations. All consignment notes are stored for a minimum of 3 years.

Water quality

Dental unit waterlines undergo disinfection, flushing and maintenance to minimise the risk of bio-contamination. Practice water is inspected and tested as necessary to maintain water quality. The practice uses Reverse Osmosis water.

Training

Each member of the team undergoes regular training and review and has a responsibility to ensure a safe working environment for all. Training includes the principles of infection prevention, the use of decontamination equipment and materials, the daily inspection and testing of equipment and the maintenance of records.



Audit

We audit and review infection prevention procedures every six months in accordance with the HTM 01-05 guidelines with the aim of a continual improvement in standards and to update this policy and procedures as necessary