

Biological Monitor

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FOR DENTAL PROFESSIONALS
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CDC's Revised Guideline for Infection Control for Dentistry is Coming Soon

In 1993, the Center of Disease Control (CDC) published the latest recommended infection control practices for dentistry—the guideline we use today. In April of this year, the CDC published a draft guideline for dental industry review.

The CDC's new guideline is expected to be published in 4th Quarter 2003. One indicating factor of the extent of guideline changes is that the 1993 guideline was 11 pages; the 2003 draft guideline is 104 pages. This begs the question: "How will this new guideline affect my practice?"

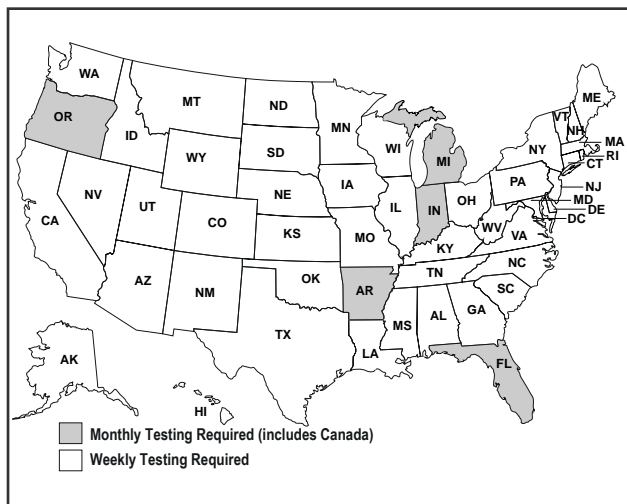
The following is a summary of the major revisions as identified in the draft guideline. Keep in mind that the final guideline may vary. The draft guideline includes:

- 1 Dental water quality.** Maintenance and monitoring of dental unit water.
- 2 Hand Hygiene products and surgical hand antisepsis.** Further defines the preferred methods of hand hygiene based on the type of procedure and includes alcohol-based hand rubs as an "antiseptic agent."
- 3 Flash sterilization limitations.** Limits the use of "flash" or "fast" cycles (higher temperatures with shorter times for unpackaged instruments) to carefully selected clinical situations.
- 4 Standard precautions.** CDC developed guidelines that combined the components of universal precautions and body substance isolation (designed to reduce the risk of transmission of pathogens from moist body substances) into one set of precautions known as standard precautions.
- 5 Work restriction for healthcare personnel occupationally exposed to or infected with**

The 1993 CDC guideline for infection control is 11 pages. The 2003 draft guideline is 104 pages. What should you expect?

Are You Meeting Regulations?

Sterilization Regulations for Dental Practices



infectious diseases. A summary of suggested work restrictions for healthcare personnel exposed to or infected with infectious diseases of importance in healthcare settings, in the absence of state and local regulations.

- 6 Management of occupational exposures to blood borne pathogens,** including post exposure prophylaxis (PEP).
- 7 Selection and use of devices with features engineered to prevent sharps injuries.**
- 8 Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE's).**
- 9 Contact dermatitis and latex hypersensitivity.**
- 10 Boil water advisories.**
- 11 Discontinued flushing dental unit waterlines at the beginning of the day.**
- 12 Program Evaluation.**

In this Issue

Tired of Dry Cracked Hands?

The CDC states that alcohol-based hand rub products have proven to be more effective for standard hand washing or hand antisepsis in healthcare settings. And they are better for your hands.

By the Numbers

Interesting facts on numbers. Can you guess what the numbers 104, 500 and 16 tell you?

Tired of Dry Cracked Hands

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently published their

Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare

Settings. The guideline highlights the use of alcohol-based hand rubs in healthcare settings. The CDC guideline states alcohol-based hand rub products have proven to be more effective for standard hand washing or hand antisepsis by healthcare workers than soap or antimicrobial soaps (Table 1). In addition, the CDC Guideline states that alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of microorganisms on skin, are fast acting and cause less skin irritation.

In surveys, approximately 25 percent of health-care workers report symptoms or signs of dermatitis involving their hands, and as many as 85

percent give a history of having skin problems.

Frequent washing with traditional soaps removes your skin's natural oil and is a

primary cause of chronic irritant contact dermatitis among health-care workers. Affected persons often complain of a feeling of dryness or burn-

ing; skin that feels "rough," and erythema, scaling or fissures. Detergents damage the skin by causing denaturation and decreased stratum corneum water-binding capacity.

One strategy for reducing the exposure to irritating soaps and detergents is to promote the use of alcohol-based hand rubs. The CDC recently released the graphs shown in Table 2 demonstrating that alcohol-based hand rubs containing emollients were better tolerated by healthcare workers than washing hands with non-antimicrobial soaps or antimicrobial soaps.

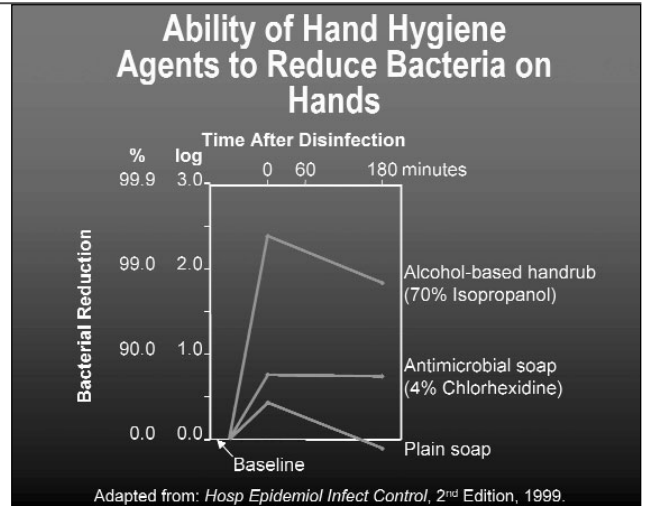
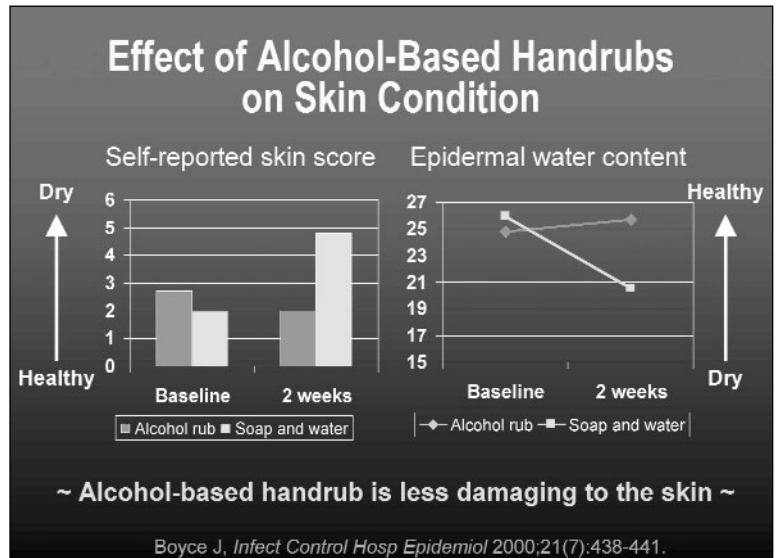


Table 1

Table 2

One strategy for reducing exposure to irritating soaps and detergents is to promote the use of alcohol-based hand rubs.



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By the Numbers

16 500 104

The number of pages contained in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention draft Recommended Infection Control Practices for Dentistry, 2003. The current guideline (1993) is 11 pages. The 2003 guideline is scheduled for release in the 4th quarter of this year.

The CDC's guideline for the maximum number of bacteria measured in colony forming units per milliliter (CFU/mL) of water used as a coolant/irritant for non-surgical dental procedures. Also the standard for safe drinking water.

The number of biological spore tests that are skipped during the year because the person responsible failed to remember to test.