

## **Infection Control**

### **Standards and Best Practice**

With all of the increased media attention on infection outbreaks such as AIDS and multi-drug resistant strains of viruses, it's no wonder people have heightened concerns about infection control during a medical procedure.

Gloves, gowns and masks are required to be worn in all dentist offices today, a far cry from just a few decades ago, when fewer than one-third of all dentists even wore such personal protective equipment, or PPE. After each patient visit, disposable PPE-such as gloves, drapes, needles, and scalpel blades-are thrown away, hands are washed, and a new pair of gloves used for the next patient.

All hand instruments used on patients are washed, disinfected and/or sterilized with chemicals or steam after each use.

One of the most effective methods for preventing disease transmission-washing one's hands-is practiced in our office. It is routine procedure to wash hands at the beginning of the day, before and after glove use, and after touching any surfaces that may have become contaminated.

### **Water Quality and Biofilms**

Concerns about the quality of water used in a dentist's office are unfounded, provided the dentist follows the infection control guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and the American Dental Association.

Some health "experts" in recent years have called into question the risks associated with so-called "biofilms," which are thin layers of microscopic germs that collect on virtually any surface. Essentially, these bacteria and fungi occur everywhere, including faucets in your home; your body is no less accustomed to being exposed to them than in any other situations.

In fact, no scientific evidence has linked biofilms with disease. If you have a compromised or weakened immune system, you are susceptible to germs everywhere. Consequently, let our office know if you have such a condition so additional precautions, if any, can be taken.

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