



Engage Your Patients in a Conversation About Infection Control

Q. I see you have information on 'Dental Infection Control Awareness Month.' What is that?

A. Dental Infection Control Awareness Month is an annual campaign about infection control in the dental office. Held in September, it highlights infection control in dentistry. Infection control is one of the things our office is committed to, so we can provide you with safe care. We take it very seriously.

Q. What is 'infection control?'

A. 'Infection control' means that bacteria and other germs cannot be transferred to or from you or another patient, or us, when we treat you—for example directly from person to person, or via instruments, worktops, and other items. That's why our office follows all of the CDC guidelines and recommendations—to prevent transferring or transmitting bacteria and other germs that can cause disease.

Q. What do you do for infection control?

A. We do everything in the CDC guidelines. For example, we use sterile instruments, and disposable instruments and supplies that are used only for you and then thrown out. That means there are no bacteria and germs on them when we use them to treat you. We wash our hands, wear new gloves and masks for each patient, and we make sure work surfaces are cleaned and disinfected between patients.

Q. How do I know that everything is done here (in the office) for infection control?

A. We have procedures in place and make sure to routinely follow the guidelines. It needs to be second nature and it's really important. Everyone in our office is regularly trained on infection control. The plastic-type wrap you see over our equipment and chairs when you come in is an example of what we do—it protects you and is swapped out between patients. We'd also be happy to show you how our sterilization center works.

Q. What if a patient is already ill with something like the flu?

A. We ask that patients who are sick call us to reschedule their appointment, and we also ask staff to call if they are sick. This prevents a sick patient (or staff) from mixing with other patients and our staff in the waiting area. It's also better for the patient calling in.

Q. What about the sterilizers and disinfectants you use? Are the bacteria (germs) resistant to those?

A. Bacteria and other germs can't resist sterilization, so even if they are resistant to antibiotics (are antimicrobial resistant) they are still killed by sterilization. They are also not resistant to the disinfectants we use—these work on bacteria and germs whether they are resistant.

Q. What is OSAP?

A. OSAP is a non-profit organization dedicated to infection control in dentistry that's been around for over 30 years, and provides us with educational materials, updates and training.



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