

Infection control: You were asking...

This past January I was a presenter in Barrie as part of the ODHA Professional Development Seminar Series. A few topics were discussed that required followup and I would like to share my responses with all dental hygienists, not just those who attended the seminar.

Hand lotions:

I noted that petroleum-based hand lotion could weaken latex gloves and increase permeability. A participant asked about other lotions and if they can also have the same effect on vinyl gloves. Most lotions should not be worn under gloves. Those that contain oil (mineral, jojoba, coconut, or palm), petroleum (gels and salves), or lanolin can degrade latex and vinyl gloves, compromising barrier integrity.

Although a hand-care regimen incorporating these products is encouraged outside the workplace, only compatible lotions should be worn under gloves. Alternative lotions for use with gloves include those with a water base, glycerin or other non-oil base.

Here is a simple experiment to assess the potential degrading properties of a particular lotion. Cut two equal 0.25 - 2 in. strips from the palm or back surface of the glove. Stretch and secure the strips to approximately three times their length. Coat one with the lotion in question, leaving the other uncoated as a control.

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by Simone
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After 30 minutes, release the strips and place them side by side. If the lotion-treated sample has enlarged either in length or width and breaks more easily than the control, the material's mechanical stability has been degraded and the lotion is unacceptable.

Virox Technologies Inc.:

Dental hygienists might not be aware that hydrogen peroxide products exist. They are manufactured by Virox Technologies Inc. and different products are available from environmental surface to high level disinfectants. Some of the products include Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide, Virox 5, Percept, Accel. Several hospitals are using these products.

If you wish further information on these hydrogen peroxide products or want to talk to a representative in your area, contact Virox Technology at 1-800-387-7578 or visit www.cirontech.com or contact SciCan at 1-800-667-7733 or visit www.scican.com

Eyewash station:

Although eyewash was not part of my presentation, it is important and the subject was raised following the seminar. All dental offices using disinfectant products must have an eye wash station/bottle to comply with Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS). You can either have a plum eyewash station or a hook-up on your water faucet.

An eyewash bottle is also acceptable - preferably affixed to the wall. The one I am familiar with comes from Niagara Pharmaceutical, which has a tamper-proof seal, easy twist top and a pre-typed expiry date. The bottle does not need to be changed unless used or the sealed top has been tampered with.

Towels:

Another important topic is the use of towels. Reusable towels are often used in the dental office. It is best practice to use paper towels instead, since reusable towels can become contaminated between changes. •

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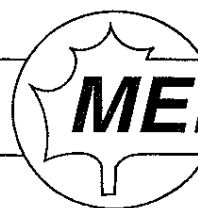
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