

# Infection control

## Code of Practice No: C006 [2007]

Issue date: July 2007  
Updated date: May 2009  
Effective date: 1 July 2009  
Next review date: July 2010

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### PREAMBLE

#### Purpose

1. This code of practice has been developed pursuant to section 118(1)(g) of the *Health Professions Registration Act 2005* (the Act). Its purpose is to ensure that dental health practitioners and dental students practise in a way that maintains and enhances public health and safety by ensuring that the risk of the spread of infectious diseases is prevented or minimized.

#### Scope

2. This code applies to all persons with current registration under the Act except for those who have been granted non-practising registration under the terms of section 11 of the Act.

### REVIEW

3. This code of practice will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it accords with legislation, national and international standards and any developments in the provision of dental care.

### INTRODUCTION

4. Many infectious agents are present in health care settings.
5. The purpose of infection control is to prevent the transmission of these disease-producing microorganisms:
  - from one patient to another;
  - from practitioner to patient;
  - from patient to practitioner or other staff (such as an assistant, receptionist, laboratory technician).
6. Effective infection control requires attention to the following matters:
  - a. applying basic measures for infection control (this includes observing standard and additional precautions, identifying hazards and minimizing risks, identifying who is at risk and from what);
  - b. adopting quality management practices (this includes administrative arrangements such as a documented infection control program in which staff are educated and regularly retrained, understanding the ethical and legal considerations that affect the delivery of dental care);
  - c. developing effective work practices and procedures that prevent the transmission of infectious agents (such as correct handwashing and personal hygiene, use of personal protective equipment; environmental hygiene including the design and maintenance of premises, management of clinical wastes, handling and disposal of sharps, handling of blood, the management of incidents involving exposure to blood or body fluid, environmental cleaning and spills management and protection for practitioners including maintaining health status records, advocacy for immunisation and testing of immune status);
  - d. establishing transmission-based precautions for specific infectious diseases (this includes identifying the major risk factors and establishing management procedures for patients, practitioners and their staff, instruments, the practice etc).

[Adapted from Commonwealth Government Department of Health & Ageing *Infection control guidelines for the prevention of transmission of infectious diseases in the health care setting*]

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## REQUIREMENTS

### Documentation

7. Every place where dental care is being provided must have the following three documents in either hard copy or electronic form. "Electronic form" includes guaranteed internet access. Every working practitioner and all staff must have access to these documents:
  - a. a **manual** setting out the infection control protocols and procedures used in that practice, which is based on the documents listed at b. and c.;
  - b. the Australian Dental Association Inc's **ADA Guidelines for Infection Control** (published August 2008);
  - c. the Australian and New Zealand Standard **AS/NZS 4815:2006. Office-based health care facilities – Reprocessing of reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of the associated environment** (practitioners work under AS/NZS 4815 *unless* they work within an organization that operates under AS/NZS 4187:[current edition] *Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilizing reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of associated environments in health care facilities*).

### Behaviours

8. Every dental health practitioner and dental student must:
  - a. ensure the premises in which he or she practises are kept in a clean and hygienic state to prevent the spread of infectious disease;
  - b. ensure that in attending a patient he or she takes such steps as are practicable to prevent or contain the spread of infectious disease; and
  - c. act in accordance with the requirements set out in the three documents referred to at point 7 above.

## NON-COMPLIANCE

9. The Board may take disciplinary action against dental health practitioners or students who fail to comply with these infection control requirements.

## RESOURCES

10. *ADA Guidelines for Infection Control* is available from:  
<http://www.ada.org.au/dentalProfessionals/publications/guideinfectcont.aspx>
11. Standards Australia documents are available from:  
<http://www.standards.com.au>  
19-25 Raglan Street, South Melbourne Victoria 3205  
☎ 1300 65 46 46
12. Dental Practice Board of Victoria's publications are available from:  
<http://www.dentprac.vic.gov.au>  
☎ +61 3 9694 9900
13. An example of a procedures manual for infection control in dental practice can be found at the Australian Dental Association Victorian Branch Inc's website at:  
[www.adavb.com.au](http://www.adavb.com.au) (under Member Services/Infection Control)
14. National Health & Medical Research Council *The Australian Immunisation Handbook (current edition)* available at:  
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/cdhome.htm>

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15. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USA) *Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings – 2003* available at:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/guidelines/index.htm>
16. Department of Health & Ageing's *Infection control guidelines* is available online at:  
<http://www.icg.health.gov.au>