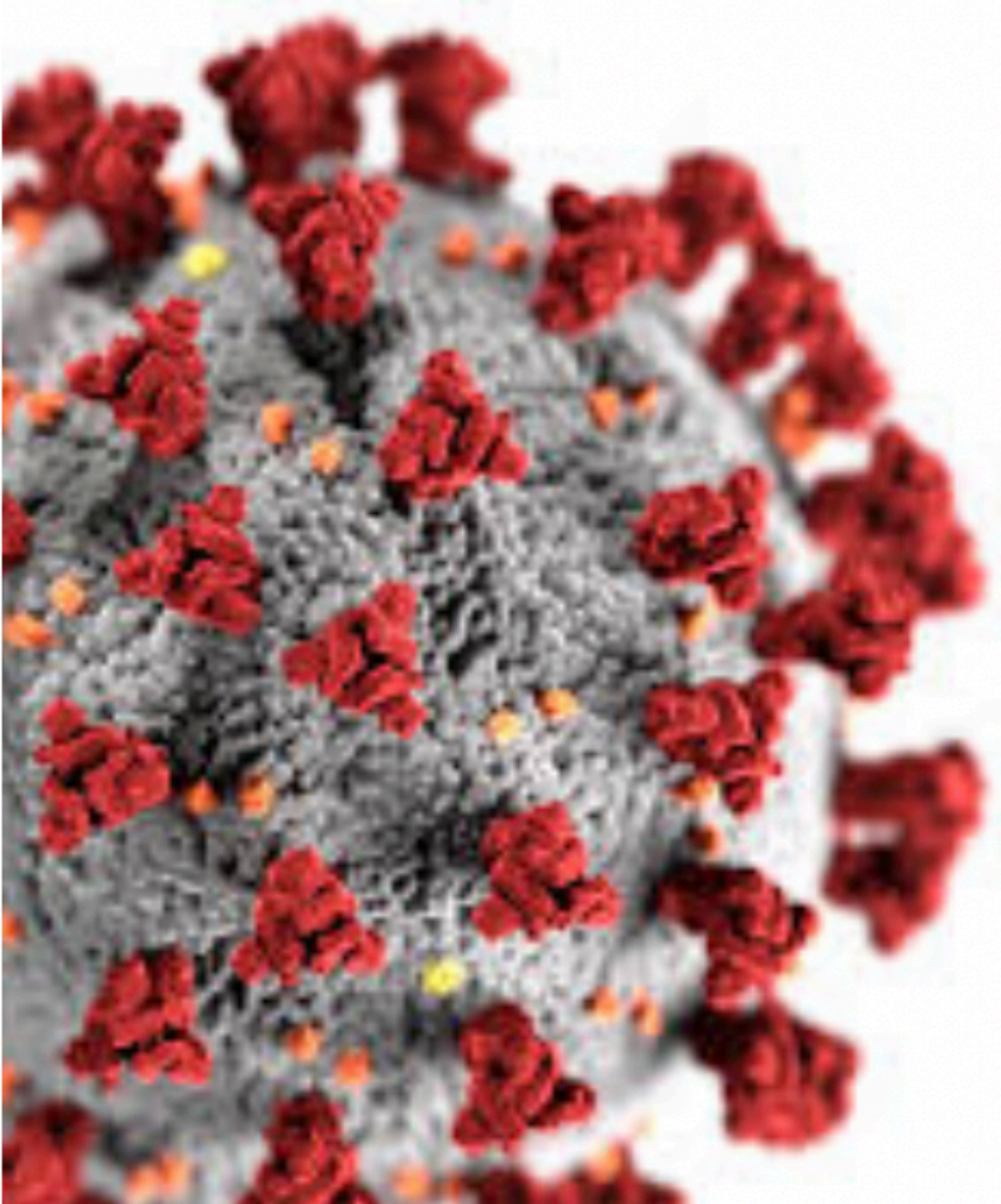




Prime Practice

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL



19 tips for Infection Prevention: COVID-19 & beyond



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INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Get Confidently Compliant.

Infection Prevention and Control is nothing new to dental teams. COVID-19 has given us a timely reminder of how important the measures we take are and the opportunity to let our patients know the care we take for them too.

We've compiled a few tips for Infection Prevention to help your team and your practice **Get Safe. Be Safe. Stay Safe.**



TIP #1: Have a risk assessment strategy.

Having an Infection Prevention Management Plan with a strong emphasis on risk management lays a foundation for successful infection prevention and control outcomes.



TIP #2: Know your mask.

Whether you are implementing Standard Precautions or during periods of Transmission-Based Precautions, it is crucial you understand your mask. Selection, donning and doffing can all impact how much protection it gives you.



TIP #3: Review your Policy & Procedure Manual.

Robust Policies and Procedures are the building blocks for a strong practical implementation of infection prevention in your practice. But they are not worth a thing if they are not kept current. Take the time to review your manual.



TIP #4: Appoint an Infection Prevention Coordinator.

An Infection Prevention Coordinator takes responsibility for managing all aspects of Infection Prevention in the practice. They are a current member of the team that wants to ensure that the policies, procedures and quality assurance of the practice are always at top notch.



TIP #5: Your PPE is only as good as the wearer.

For the dental team, PPE is the last line of defence from potential infection but if you wear it incorrectly, you may as well not wear it at all. Have your team trained up in the correct PPE selection, wearing and disposal.



TIP #6: Gloves are only a barrier.

We've all heard about how important Hand Hygiene is but why is it if we're wearing gloves? Gloves are only a barrier. A latex glove is porous to approximately 5 microns. An average viral microorganism is approximately 120 nano-metres. Think of it - it's like throwing a golf ball through a basketball hoop.

Hand hygiene is critical.



TIP #7: **Surfaces must be cleaned to be disinfected.**

Disinfectant products are not a magic bullet and must only be applied to a clean surface. Studies have shown that the level of bioburden left on a surface impacts a disinfectant's ability to denature microorganisms. It is neutralised by too much soil on a surface. Always clean with a clinical grade detergent first.



TIP #8: **Mechanical cleaning is the preferred cleaning method.**

For too long now, many practices have maintained a process of 'scrubbing' instruments prior to placing them in an ultrasonic bath. Mechanical cleaning is the preferred method of cleaning to limit manual handling and reduce the risk of exposure to contamination.

Ultrasonic first - manually clean only if required.



TIP #9: **You must have flushing protocols for Dental Unit Water Lines.**

Biofilm formation in Dental Unit Water Lines is well documented as far back as 1963. Water left in lines overnight or for extended periods stagnates. Handpieces may suck back when stopping.

DUWL's must be treated to prevent biofilm formation and flushed to remove stagnant water and suck back.



TIP #10: **Cycle monitoring must be done for every load.**

Cycle monitoring for every load processed in the steriliser must be recorded. This includes recording the date, load or cycle number, the steriliser used, Parametric Release, time and temperature and the load releaser.



TIP #11: **Pre-screen your patients.**

Part of any good risk assessment strategy is eliminating a hazard in the first instance. Pre-screening your patients at the booking call can help to eliminate the risk of infectious disease entering your practice. Defer treatment that is non-urgent where ever possible.



TIP #12: Wipe as you go.

Forms of mechanical cleaning such as ultrasonic baths and instruments washer only remove organic soil. Wiping instruments at the point of use can reduce the amount of soil that needs to be removed during the cleaning process making it more efficacious.



TIP #13: Use a pre-procedural mouth rinse.

There is growing scientific evidence that a pre-procedural mouth rinse can reduce the number of microorganisms in a patient's saliva. This in turn reduces the number of potentially infectious microorganism in aerosol contamination.



TIP #14: Transmission-Based Precautions always existed.

Transmission-Based Precautions are nothing new and were not introduced just for COVID-19. These precautions used in addition to Standard Precautions should be used whenever you must see a patient who has infectious disease - i.e influenza or measles.



TIP #15: Get Bare Below the Elbows.

Jewellery, wristwatches and nail varnish all impede good Hand Hygiene. Adopt a "Bare Below the Elbow" policy to improve Hand Hygiene outcomes in your practice.



TIP #16: Hand Hygiene education is required to be included in annual training.

Hand Hygiene plays an important role in breaking the chain of transmission for most pathogenic microorganisms. The product used, technique and length of time Hand Hygiene is performed for are all critical factors for positive outcomes. Annual refresher training must be provided as part of your training program.



TIP #17: Know your order.

Personal Protection Equipment is only as good as the wearer. The risk of contamination is present if PPE is placed or removed incorrectly. Understanding correct use of PPE is critical to your protection.



TIP #18: Sharps must be removed by the generator.

It is a requirement of the standards along with relevant industry guidelines that used sharp items are removed at the point of use by the person who generated the sharp; i.e the clinician.

Place small sharps containers in treatment rooms to facilitate compliance.



TIP #19: Take your time.

Schedule patients for enough time that you can perform your turnover procedures safely and thoroughly. During periods where Transmission-Based Precautions are in use, allow time for acceptable social distancing in common areas.



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AND CONTROL**

Our Infection Prevention and Control team have extensive experience in dental clinical workflows and the challenges practices face to achieve compliant policies, procedures and most importantly, behaviours. We believe the reprocessing area is the heart of your practice - if it doesn't work, neither do you.

We want everyone to Get Safe. Be Safe. Stay Safe.

Get Confidently Compliant.

Train your entire dental team and foster a team-managed approach to Infection Prevention and Control.

Visit www.compliance.primepractice.com.au/compliance to view all of our products, training, and services available.



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