

Persons Who Should Receive The Flu Vaccine

People at high risk for influenza-related complications: adults and children with chronic cardiac or pulmonary disorders; people who reside in nursing homes or chronic care facilities; people 65+ years of age; adults and children with chronic conditions (diabetes, metabolic diseases), cancer, immunodeficiency, immunosuppression, renal disease, anemia and hemoglobinopathy; children and adolescents (6 months to 18 years) with conditions treated for long periods with aspirin;

people at high risk of influenza complications embarking on travel to destinations where the virus is likely to be circulating.

People capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk of influenza-related complications. Health care workers and household contacts of people at high risk.

People who provide essential community services (police, fire) to minimize disruption of routine activities.

Other potential recipients – healthy adults and children who wish to protect themselves from influenza should also be encouraged to receive the vaccine.

Pregnant women – the vaccine is considered safe for women in all stages of pregnancy and for breast-feeding mothers⁴.

Resources:

1. Centers for Disease Control, July 29, 2005. *Prevention and Control of Influenza*. MMWR. 54 (RR08); 1-40.
2. Organization for Safety and Asepsis Procedures. August, 2004. *Influenza. Infection Control In Practice*. Vol. 3, No. 6.
3. www.gov.ns.ca/health/PublicHealth 2004. *Important Information about Influenza and Influenza Vaccine*. Nova Scotia Department of Health.
4. National Advisory Committee on Immunization. 2002. *Canadian Immunization Guide*. Canadian Medical Association.
5. www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/guidance/C/index.htm January 8, 2004. SARS Supplement C: Preparedness and Response in Healthcare Facilities. Centers for Disease Control.

Questions or Concerns ?

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Infection Control Newsletter Archives:
http://www.dal.ca/%7Eehs/radiatio_3629.html



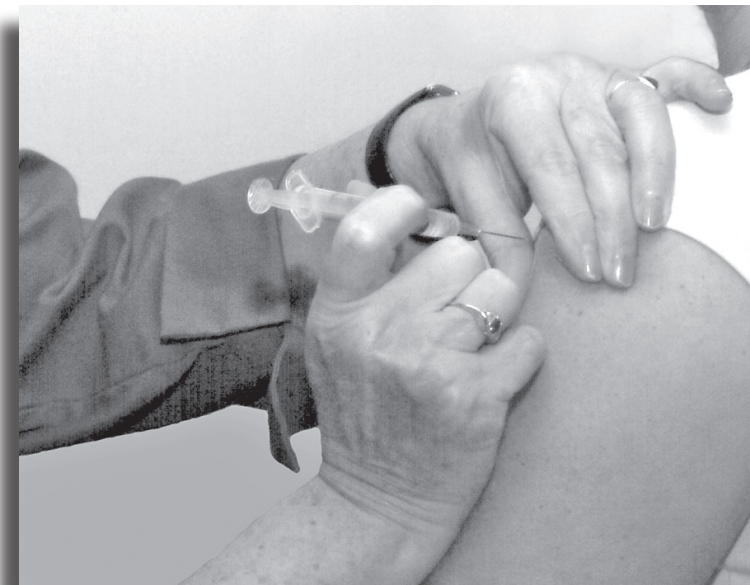
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Maintaining High Standards in Infection Control and Safety



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Spore Testing! Why Do It?

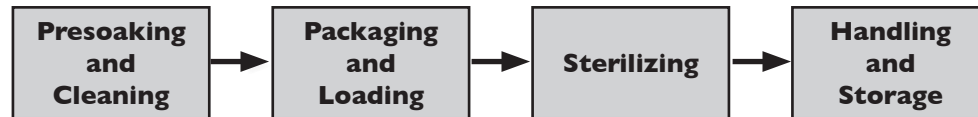
Andrea Rockwell, R.T., B.Sc., M.Sc.

The transmission of infectious diseases is a major concern to the health care professional today. Both patient and health care worker are at risk. Dental health care workers and patients are exposed to a wide variety of microorganisms.

The chart below lists some of the infectious disease risks in dentistry.

INFECTION	MICROORGANISM
Herpes infections	Herpes Simplex Virus type 1 and 2
Hepatitis B	Hepatitis B Virus
Hepatitis C	Hepatitis C Virus
Hepatitis D	Hepatitis D Virus
AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
Candidiasis	Candida albicans
Tuberculosis	Mycobacterium tuberculosis
Staphylococcal infections	Staphylococcus aureus
Streptococcal infections	Streptococcus pyogenes

Reusable dental instruments are one potential source of cross-contamination and infection in the dental care setting. Effective sterilization is essential to prevent this from occurring. Sterilization is a multi-step process and can be depicted as follows:



The sterilizing step destroys microbial life. All reusable heat stable instruments and items that penetrate soft tissue and bone, referred to as critical patient care items, as well as semi-critical patient care items that touch mucous membranes or non intact skin, should be heat sterilized¹. Regular monitoring of the heat sterilizer is essential. Each sterilization load should be monitored with mechanical (time, temperature, pressure gauges) monitors and chemical indicators. Chemical indicators are designed to respond with a characteristic chemical or physical change to one or more parameters within the sterilization chamber. They do not prove sterility has been achieved but may help detect equipment malfunction. They confirm that items have been put through a sterilization cycle. **Spore Tests**, also known as **Biological Indicators**, are made up of highly resistant non-pathogenic bacterial spores. The killing of these spores when put through a sterilization cycle offers proof that microbial life has been destroyed. **They are the only true test of sterility.**

The CDC recommends at least weekly use of spore tests to assure correct functioning of sterilization cycles¹.

Resources:

1. CDC, Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health Care Setting— 2003, MMWR December 19, 2003 / 52(RR17); 1-61

Are You Ready For Flu Season?

Cathy MacLean RN, MA, CIC

As a health care provider, you can prepare for the flu season by receiving an influenza vaccine and taking action to reduce the transmission of respiratory infections.

Influenza Vaccine

Health care workers who have contact with **patients at high risk** or who work in chronic care facilities, who are 50+ years of age, or who have high risk medical conditions should receive an annual flu vaccine¹.

Annual vaccination against influenza is necessary in order to have protection against changing viral strains². An annual flu vaccine also reduces the number of work days lost due to respiratory illness³.

You should not receive the vaccine if you have had a severe allergic reaction to eggs, presently have a high fever, or have ever had an allergic reaction to the vaccine in the past².

The vaccine will not give you the flu. It is prepared with an inactivated virus. However, the flu vaccine cannot prevent the common cold or influenza strains not included in the vaccine².

Common side effects of receiving the flu vaccine are a sore, red arm (redness, pain, and swelling at the injection site). Acetaminophen can be taken to alleviate these symptoms⁴.

You can acquire the vaccine from a public health clinic or your family physician. The vaccine is available each year in October. It takes two weeks for your body to develop protection against the virus³.

Reduce Disease Transmission

Influenza is spread easily and rapidly from person to person by coughing and sneezing. The virus may incubate in infected persons from 1-4 days. Adults can transmit disease to others 1 day before and up to 5 days after symptoms appear. Children can be infectious 6 days before onset of illness and during 10 days of illness².

You have the flu if you experience: a fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches².

People who do fall ill should get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, avoid alcohol and tobacco, use over the counter medications for symptoms, stay home to prevent transmission, and cover their mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing. Do not give aspirin to children or teens with flu-like symptoms².

Ask patients to reschedule their appointment if they have flu symptoms. In waiting areas advise patients of respiratory hygiene/ cough etiquette and provide necessary supplies (tissues, waste disposal receptacle and hand washing capacity)⁵.

Biological Sterilizer Monitoring Service

A Biological Sterilizer Monitoring Service is offered by The Oral Pathology Lab, Division of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Faculty of Dentistry, Dalhousie University.

For more information, phone (902)494-3768.

