

HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY	
TITLE: Code of Practice on Infection Control	
EFFECTIVE DATE: September 2005	DATE LAST REVIEWED: August 2008
BOARD: Dental Board of the Northern Territory	

Objective

The Code of Practice on Infection Control has been developed to direct dental practitioners to 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 minimised.

The Code applies to all dental practitioners who are registered under the *Health Practitioners Act 2004* and who are practising in the Northern Territory. Registered dental practitioners include;

- Dentists;
- Dental Specialists;
- Dental Hygienists;
- Dental Prosthetists;
- Dental Therapists.

The Code also applies to practising Dental Students.

The Board has determined that the practise of dentistry means:

- (a) advice, attendances, services, procedures and operations relating to the treatment of human teeth, gums, jaws and proximate tissues; and
- (b) the fitting of, and the taking of impressions or measurements for the purpose of fitting dental prostheses and other intra-oral appliances.

Introduction

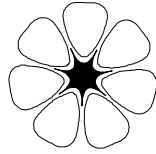
Many potentially infectious agents are present in health care settings. The purpose of infection control is to prevent the transmission of these disease-producing microorganisms:-

- from one patient to another;
- from dental practitioner to patient; and
- from patient to dental practitioner or other staff (such as an assistant, receptionist, laboratory technician).

Practice Documentation Requirements

Every practice 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 must have access to these documents:

1. A manual based on the documents below which sets out the infection control protocols and procedures to be used in the practice.



2. The Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing's ***Infection control guidelines for the prevention of transmission of infectious diseases in the health care setting*** ;
3. 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***;
4. Those dental practitioners who work within an organisation that also operates under Standard AS/NZS 4187 **must** also have this fourth document, AS/NZS 4187 [current edition] ***Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of the associated environment in health care facilities.***

Behaviours

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 necessary to prevent or contain the spread of infectious disease; and
- c. act in accordance with the requirements set out in the documents referred to above.

Non-compliance

Failing to comply with the Code of Practice on Infection Control may constitute professional misconduct and disciplinary action may be taken, pursuant to section 56(2) of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004*.

Acknowledgment

The Board wishes to acknowledge the assistance provided by the Dental Practice Board of Victoria in the development of this Code.