

High

By Jeannie Boniface

Developing an infection control protocol

Do you go through staff changes in your spa? How do you train new staff to follow the high standards on which you pride yourself?

When someone new comes into any job position, that person should be able to see, in writing, a step-by-step protocol for how to clean and disinfect. In this article, I outline steps for spas to take after each client and at the end of each day to be in compliance with health board standards.

The following steps should be outlined in your protocol:

1. While treating your client

All items that you've used should go into one container with a low-level disinfectant. This is called a "holding solution." You should never disinfect the tools while treating the client, as this will add too much time to your treatment.

2. The "clean room"

A clean room is where you "process" all your instruments or tools. In this area, you should have a tray for storing the dirty instruments, a sink with soap and water, a drying area with clean towels or paper towels and a disinfecting and sterilizing area.

Standards

3. After each client

Clean, then disinfect, your work area (table top, chairs, lamps, equipment). Remember to leave the disinfectant on for the contact time outlined on the product label.

Take the instruments to the clean room. With household gloves on, wash the instruments, rinse them thoroughly and dry them. Then disinfect or sterilize the instruments according to their risk factor. (See the article in the previous issue for more information on risk categories.)

Once the tools have been processed, they're ready to use on the next client. If you're not using them, they can be stored in an airtight container. Because this whole process can take several minutes, or even hours, it's wise to have two or three sets of instruments to use on your clients.

If you have booked back-to-back clients, continue to store the dirty tools in the holding solution, and NEVER USE THE SAME TOOLS ON A DIFFERENT CLIENT!

4. At the end of the day

Along with your work area and tools, your spa or salon should be cleaned. Called the "common areas," the waiting area, washrooms, reading room, or any room clients may frequent, should be cleaned. Wipe down the mirrors and chair arms, sweep floors, clean (and disinfect) the bathroom and generally tidy up the rooms. Don't forget to disinfect doorknobs and hand railings. These are high-touch areas that could be home for bacteria.

Post your instructions in your "clean room." Have them in step-by-step point form so that everyone can quickly follow the protocol. Ensure that all your staff know where these instructions are posted, and that they understand and follow them.

Your staff will appreciate your guidance and your client's safety will be ensured!

Jeannie Boniface has worked in the infection control and dental pharmaceutical industry since 1991. She now works as a consultant to the dental, medical and beauty industries, teaching about responsible choices for proper infection control while following government guidelines. Jeannie teaches the Level II Infection Control Course for the North American School of Podology (NASP) and is the manager for the Infection Control division of KLTD International Inc.