Managing the Regulatory Environment
ADA’s Guidelines for Practice Success™ (GPS™)

ADA Do’s and Don’ts for Maintaining Dental Unit Water Lines

DO’S

• Check with your state’s dental board to determine whether it has regulations or standards regarding maintenance of dental unit water lines.
• Make sure staff is trained and knowledgeable about water lines maintenance procedures and any products used.
  o Staff should read product labels for any disinfectants used in dental unit water lines.
  o All clinical staff should know the appropriate water quality for performing routine procedures versus that needed when performing oral-surgical procedures since their requirements do vary.
• Create and use a checklist to help ensure that all steps related to water line safety are being followed.
  o A sample checklist is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on page 10 of its resource Infection Prevention Checklist for Dental Settings: Basic Expectations for Safe Care.
• Make sure the practice’s water line treatment schedule includes water quality monitoring.
• Follow recommendations for monitoring water quality provided by the manufacturer of the dental unit or waterline treatment product.
  o Many practices use water quality indicators, which are typically easy to use, inexpensive, and provide accurate results.
  o If using the municipal water supply for the dental unit water supply, another option is to use mail-in testing kits which involve shipping water samples to a laboratory for analysis.
• Assign someone on the team the daily responsibility of monitoring local alerts to find out whether any boil water orders have been issued.
• Always follow manufacturers’ guidelines for product and equipment set-up, use, cleaning, storage, etc.
  o Change filters and treat water lines with shock treatment according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.
• The doctor should always sign the task list as documentation that testing of the water lines occurred.

DON’TS

• Don’t rely on flushing alone to remove biofilm buildup from water lines.

Resource: CDC Infection Prevention Checklist for Dental Settings: Basic Expectations for Safe Care

Reproduction of this material by dentists and their staff is permitted, provided that any reproduction must include the ADA copyright notice. Any other use, duplication or distribution by any other party requires the prior written approval of the American Dental Association. This material is for general reference purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Dentists should contact qualified legal counsel for legal advice, including advice pertaining to compliance with the regulation(s) discussed in the content of this resource.

© 2017 American Dental Association. All Rights Reserved.