



In collaboration with the Alberta College of Dental Hygienists, the College of Alberta Dental Assistants, and the College of Dental Technologists of Alberta, the College of Alberta Denturists has provided Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Guidelines to regulated members to support their compliance with the Standards of Practice. These became mandatory in July 2022. The IPC guidelines align with the provincial requirements from Alberta Health<sup>1</sup> of which all OHCPs are required to comply.

It is the shared responsibility of oral healthcare professionals (OHCPs) and other staff involved with each device, instrument, or piece of equipment to ensure that effective reprocessing takes place.<sup>2</sup> It is with respect to this that the College is providing further guidance.

### Supplementary Guidance

All denturists are required to adhere, in their practice, to the College's Standards of Practice and associated guidance documents. The College's IPC Guidelines came into force July 1, 2022. These guidelines provide information to denturists to carry out an effective IPC program – including instrument reprocessing.

**In addition to the mandated guidelines, it is strongly encouraged that, when using chemical indicators of any type (1 – 6), denturists always accompany the use of a chemical indicator with a biological indicator (BI). Further, denturists should wait for successful BI results prior to releasing instruments or devices for patient use regardless of the type of chemical indicator used.**

This practice will further reduce the risk to patients that is associated with instrument/device reprocessing.

### Background

*From the IPC Guidelines*

*Following use, contaminated instruments are cleaned and then disinfected or sterilized by trained staff, in a designated area (separate from patient care and laboratory areas), according to defined policies and procedures that are based on accepted standards and best practices. Monitoring and quality control are further integral to effective reprocessing. These processes as well as recalls and safeguards are put in place in the event of equipment failures. Finally, indicators are observed at point-of-use to verify that effective sterilization has taken place. (Page 27)*

*Sterilization monitoring is a key element of the sterility assurance program as it cannot be assumed that sterilization has been achieved without monitoring and provides the assurance of patient safety. Procedures for monitoring sterilization include a combination of products and techniques that evaluate sterilizing conditions. The effectiveness of the*

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Alberta. (2019, September 1). *Reusable & single-use medical devices standards: standards for the reprocessing of reusable medical devices and for the use of single-use medical devices in all health care facilities and settings.* <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460145470>

<sup>2</sup> IPC Guidelines

*procedure and proper sterilizer functioning is monitored by mechanical (physical), chemical, and biological techniques/indicators. (Page 33)*

### *Chemical Indicators*

There are three types of chemical indicators that are typically utilized in the oral health setting – Types 4, 5 and 6. When using a type 4 indicator for sterilization monitoring, the instruments processed in the load may not be released for use until the accompanying biological indicator (BI) results have been received and are considered “passed”. When a type 5 or 6 chemical indicator is used, it is not required that the OHCP wait for the results of the BI before proceeding to use the processed instruments or devices.

The reference for the above guidance is the Reusable & single-use medical device standards from Alberta Health<sup>1</sup>. Alberta Health further references the Canadian Standards Association.

## References

Alberta College of Dental Hygienists, College of Alberta Dental Assistants, College of Alberta Denturists & College of Dental Technologists of Alberta. (2022). Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines. <https://www.abdenturists.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/IPC-Guidelines-2022-FINAL.pdf>

Government of Alberta. (2019, September 1). *Reusable & single-use medical devices standards: standards for the reprocessing of reusable medical devices and for the use of single-use medical devices in all health care facilities and settings.* <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460145470>