



A survey of intermediate level dental work surface disinfectants used in the San Francisco area was conducted. This survey was part of a cooperative project sponsored by CA Dental Association, local dental societies, city agencies, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

## WHAT WE FOUND

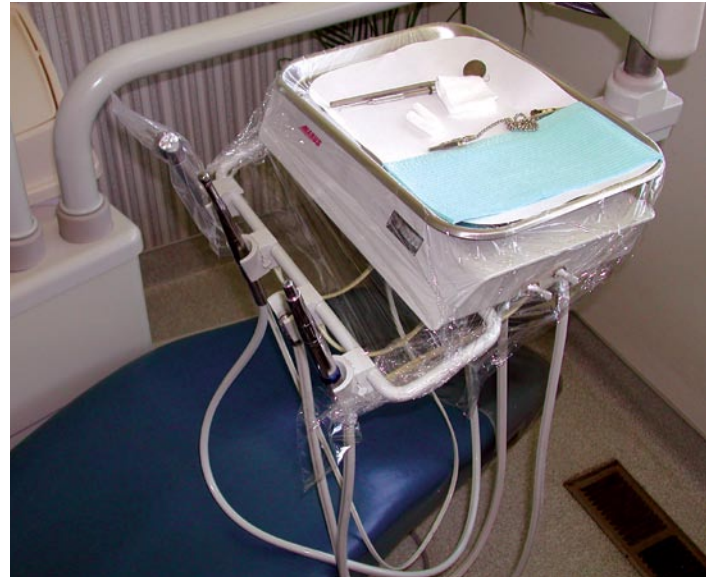
- Phenols and alcohols are the most common active ingredients in the intermediate level work surface disinfectants used in offices.
- On average, the survey respondents use 85 grams per day of intermediate level work surface disinfectant products for each active operator (equivalent to about 150 grams per dentist per day). This weight excludes water that the dental assistant adds when mixing the product.
- These disinfectants contain ingredients that pose a potential hazard to the user, building occupants, or the environment in general.

## WHAT WE RECOMMEND

These responses give us several clues on how dental practices can reduce their disinfectant chemical use, as well as the potential impact that such products may have.

We recommend the following strategies:

- Avoid products in aerosol cans.
- Mix disinfectant products according to manufacturer instructions.



- Choose disinfectant products that have the least toxic ingredients needed to accomplish the intended medical purpose. For example, do not use formaldehyde or glutaraldehyde for intermediate level disinfection.
- Use disposable plastic barriers to reduce surface contamination, thereby decreasing the amount of disinfectant needed.
- Do not routinely use intermediate level disinfectant products on housekeeping surfaces.

These alternative approaches have the important benefits of decreasing patient and staff exposure to chemical hazards, and also reducing the environmental impact of dentistry.

## MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Dental P2 Project website for additional information

<http://www.wrppn.org/dental>