



THE MOUTHY IP PODCAST

EPISODE 13:

DENTAL UNIT WATERLINES: PART 1

***ALL INFORMATION IS
ACCURATE AS OF THE
DATE THIS EPISODE
WAS RECORDED**

Summary:

We discuss the reason for, and process of treating and maintaining Dental Unit Waterlines (DUWL) for a listener who will be taking this over for her office.

Key Takeaways:

1. Maintenance for DUWLs is critical for the health of your patients. Failure to maintain them properly can lead to serious infections from pathogens left in the waterlines.
2. The water quality required for routine dental treatment must meet EPA regulatory standards for drinking water (i.e., ≤ 500 CFU/mL of heterotrophic water bacteria).
3. Chemical shock of the system should be done regularly (depending on maintenance type and according to the manufacturer's instructions for use). It is important to remove any existing bioburden in the DUWLs.
4. Both tablets and DUWL filters are effective ways to maintain the water quality in the dental unit and keep the bioburden level at a safe, low level.
5. Water quality testing should occur at least quarterly, and according to the recommendations from the dental unit manufacturer.

Resource List:

1. Manufacturer Instructions For Use (IFU) and maintenance schedules should always be referenced when working with chemicals and equipment in any healthcare facility.
2. CDC Basic Expectations for Safe Care (Pg. 15):
<https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/pdf/safe-care2.pdf>
3. CDC MMWR IC for Dental Settings (Pg. 28):
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5217.pdf>
4. FDA info on dental waterlines: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/dental-devices/dental-unit-waterlines>
5. General overview of maintenance, testing and shocking processes:
<https://www.rdhmag.com/infection-control/water-safety/article/14177569/the-impact-of-dental-waterline-maintenance-amidst-the-covid19-pandemic>
6. Article on an outbreak in a pediatric office that was traced to the waterlines:
<https://blog.proedgedental.com/blog/what-happened-in-the-dental-waterline-infection-outbreak-at-childrens-dental-group-in-anaheim>
7. CDC Summary of Infection Prevention Practices in Dental Settings: Module 9- Dental Unit Water Quality
https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/pdfs_and_other_files/BESC9-Dental-Unit-Water-508.pdf



Infection Control Assessment
and Promotion Program

Contact Nebraska ICAP at
nebraskaicap@nebraskamed.com or at
402.552.2881