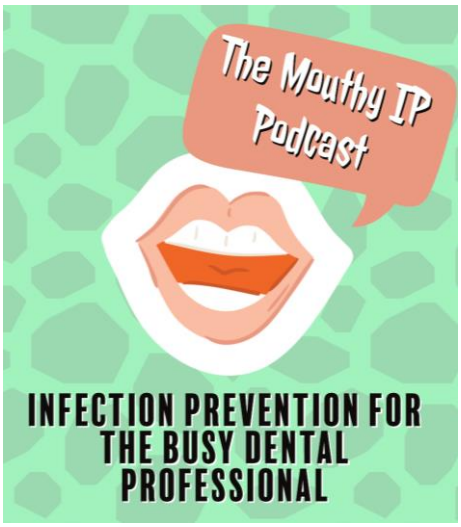
Infection Control Assessment and Promotion Program

The Mouthy IP Resources
Episode 19: Biological Monitoring



Summary:

The team is joined by Ronda Anderson, a dental infection control subject matter expert, to discuss biological monitoring for the dental practice. They cover best practice, what to do if there is a failed test, how to identify instruments in loads and record keeping requirements.

Discussion Points:

1. Biological monitors are tests that have harmless spores that are run through a sterilization cycle to test the effectiveness of the sterilizer
2. Biological monitoring should be done at least weekly in every sterilizer according to CDC best practice
3. Testing can happen in office with incubators or by mailing in test strips to be tested in a lab
4. A failed test result should prompt another confirmatory test, if confirmed the sterilizer should be taken out of use and serviced
5. Pouches and packages should be dated and labeled with the sterilizer identifier to be able to identify instruments in the event of a failed biological monitor test
6. Multiple staff should be trained on office protocols to run biological monitoring tests
7. Biological monitoring tests should be placed in a full load to get the most accurate test results
8. Control tests should be incubated to test the batch of biological monitors, these are tests that are incubated that are not sterilized
9. Test results, including control, should be logged when tests are completed

Resource List:

1. CDC. Guidelines for infection control in dental health-care settings – 2003 pdf. *MMWR* 2003;52(No. RR-17):1–66.
2. https://icap.nebraskamed.com/facilities/dental/facility-resources/
    a. Multiple resources from CDC, AAMI and ANSI as well as sterilizer log templates can be found under the 'Sterilization and Disinfection of the Patient Care Setting' section