



## Engage Your Patients in a Conversation About Surface Disinfection

### **Q. You have information on 'Dental Infection Control Awareness Month.' What is that?**

A. 'Dental Infection Control Awareness Month' is an annual campaign about infection control in the dental office, held in September. It highlights infection control in dentistry. Infection control is one of the things our office is committed to, so we can provide you with safe dental care. We take it very seriously.

### **Q. I see that some of the surfaces here are covered with plastic, including the chair I'm sitting on. Why is that?**

A. The plastic covers protect surfaces from becoming contaminated with germs and acts as a barrier. It's like putting plastic wrap over food to prevent it from becoming contaminated. We change the plastic barriers between patients. This prevents germs from being transferred from other people to the surfaces and then to you, or vice versa.

### **Q. What do you do for the surfaces I see around me (that are not covered with plastic), like the countertops? How do I know these are clean?**

A. We follow all the CDC guidelines for environmental infection control. We clean and disinfect these surfaces after treating each patient by using a hospital-grade cleaner and disinfectant. This means the surfaces are always cleaned and decontaminated before we treat you.

### **Q. Why do you treat the surfaces?**

A. We clean and disinfect the surfaces to remove contamination and to prevent transmitting germs from one patient to another.

### **Q. How do these surfaces become contaminated with germs?**

A. Germs can be spread to surfaces in the dental operatory during treatment in several ways. One way is from the spatter and aerosols created during dental treatment. Another way is by putting contaminated items such as used dental instruments on surfaces. Surfaces can also become contaminated when the clinician touches surfaces with their used gloves.

### **Q. Does it really matter, are the germs on these surfaces really a problem?**

A. Many of the bacteria and microorganisms we are exposed to in daily life do not cause a problem, however, some bacteria and germs can cause serious infections. You have probably heard about hospital- or healthcare-acquired infections—some of these are because certain germs were transferred from surfaces in the healthcare setting to other people. We clean and disinfect the surfaces in our office between patients to remove any germs that might have been present. This prevents them from being transferred to the next patient—you.

