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The Cutting Edge: Reprocessing and Maintenance *Low-Speed Handpieces, Attachments, and Burs*

ABSTRACT

Instrument reprocessing is a key component of infection control. Core steps in instrument reprocessing for handpieces, motors, and other attachments are similar to other instruments and devices; however, there are also specific steps that differ and vary by type and manufacturer. All such devices that attach to and detach from the dental unit air and waterlines should be cleaned and heat sterilized (autoclaved) following the manufacturer's instructions for reprocessing. In addition, device maintenance is essential for proper functioning, safety, and the longevity of these devices. Consideration should also be given to burs and their role in effective, efficient, and safe patient care.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of this article is to provide information on the care of low-speed handpieces and burs. After completing this article, the reader should be able to:

1. Review the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations on the reprocessing of handpieces/attachments and motors
2. List tips and know how to avoid common errors in handpiece/attachment and motor reprocessing
3. Describe the CDC recommendations for stand-alone (cordless) devices
4. Review considerations in selecting burs and their role in efficiency, safety, and the functioning of handpieces/attachments.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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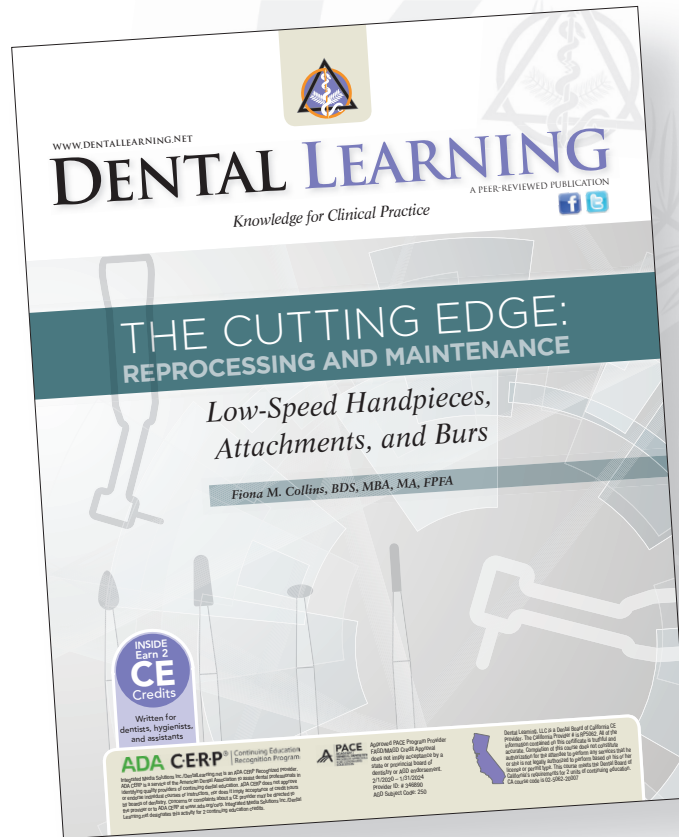
Dr. Collins has lectured nationally and internationally in North America, Europe, the Pacific Rim, and the Middle East. She has also written extensively on infection prevention. Dr. Collins is the American Dental Association representative to the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI) and a member of working groups for standards on steam sterilization and other aspects of infection control. She is also a consultant and trainer, a Fellow of the Pierre Fauchard Academy, and editor of Dental World, and has been a faculty member at OSAP Boot Camp. During her career, Dr. Collins has lived and worked in five countries. She received an honorarium for this course from Dental Learning. Dr. Collins can be reached at fionacollins@comcast.net.



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