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I work for a dental hygiene school and our clinic coordinator is wanting to have students rotate, with part of this rotation to utilize a Product A, instead of the traditional (in the U.S. at least) ultrasonic. However, there is some confusion about the actual handpieces and if they fall under the definition of traditional dental handpieces, in terms of needing to be sterilized after each use. I understand that all dental handpieces with motors must be sterilized, per the FDA and CDC, which we do, including high speeds, slow speeds, and prophylaxis handpieces. Do Product A handpieces fall in the same category of requiring sterilization between each use, even though they do not have any motors inside? Or can they be wiped down with disinfectant wipes, then sterilized during the lunch break and at the end of the day?

In a 2018 statement, the CDC notes: *For handpieces and other intraoral instruments that can be removed from the air and waterlines of dental units, CDC continues to recommend that DHCP follow CDC guidelines to clean and heat sterilize.*

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Handpieces should be reprocessed in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for use (IFU). This should include cleaning, lubricating and sterilizing these devices. ^{1,2}

It is recommended that if you have further questions that you contact the Product A handpiece manufacturer directly for further information about the product IFU.

Resources

(1) US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Statement on Reprocessing Dental Handpieces. <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/statement-on-reprocessing-dental-handpieces.htm> Accessed on March 1, 2019.

(2) US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dental Handpieces and Other Devices Attached to Air and Waterlines. <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/questions/dental-handpieces.html> Accessed on March 1, 2019.

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