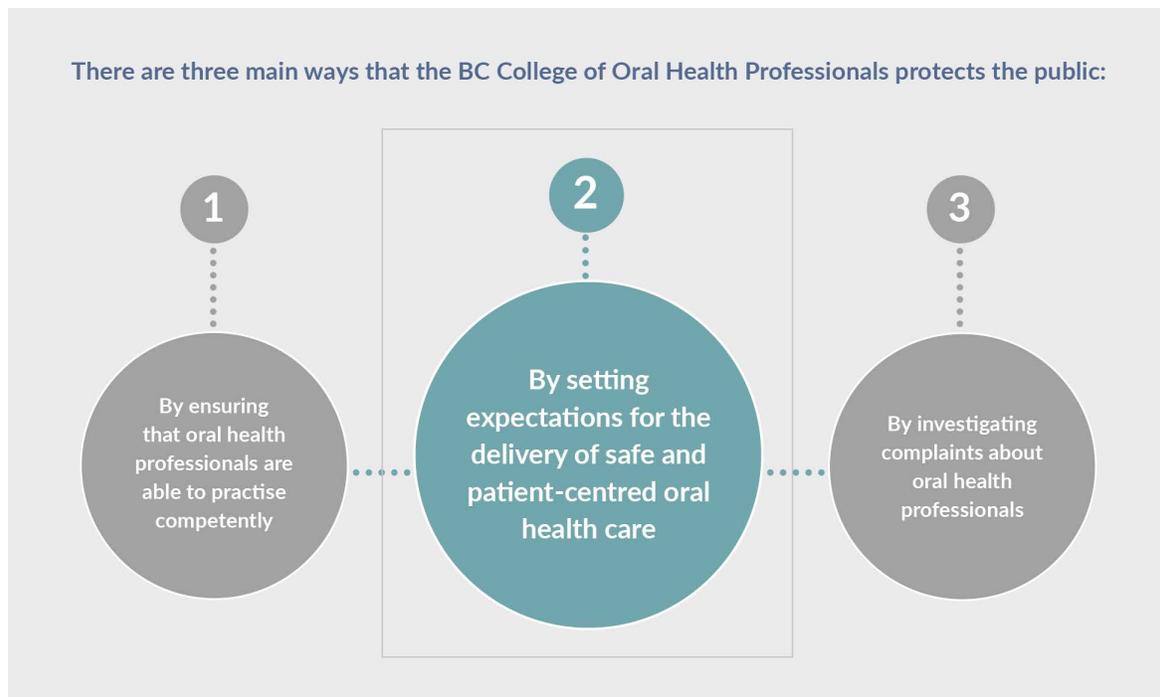


Expectations for clinical and ethical practice

Interpretation Guidelines: Chlorhexidine

Applies to Dental Hygienists

There are three main ways that the BC College of Oral Health Professionals protects the public:



The British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals (BCCOHP) was created on September 1, 2022 through the amalgamation of four health regulatory colleges: the College of Dental Hygienists of BC, the College of Dental Surgeons of BC, the College of Dental Technicians of BC, and the College of Denturists of BC. All current requirements for standards of clinical and ethical practice issued by the four colleges remain in place upon amalgamation. This document was created by the College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia and will be updated to reflect the amalgamation.

Chlorhexidine

May 5, 2020 Update: The CDHBC Interpretation Guidelines are under review. The content of these guidelines remains in place at this time; however, they need to be applied in the context of the new Dental Hygienists Regulation and CDHBC Bylaws. Readers are welcome to contact the CDHBC office if they have questions about the application of these guidelines in the interim time.

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines on the use of chlorhexidine by dental hygienists.

BACKGROUND

Chlorhexidine has been shown to be an effective anti-plaque and anti-gingivitis chemotherapeutic agent. Topical oral preparations of therapeutic chlorhexidine and chlorhexidine salts are listed on the federal *Food and Drugs Act* Prescription Drug List. The federal *Act* is enacted through provincial legislation. The BC legislation is the Drug Schedules Regulation to the *Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act* of British Columbia, which lists chlorhexidine as a “Schedule I – Prescription” drug.

Schedule I drugs require a prescription for sale and are provided to the public by a pharmacist following the diagnosis and professional intervention of a “practitioner”. Specific practitioners who may prescribe a Schedule I drug for sale are defined by provincial legislation. This includes dentists and physicians.

Chlorhexidine is routinely used in dental settings as a pre-procedural rinse, for irrigation, and/or for topical application. Chlorhexidine oral rinses may be provided by a dental office to a client for home use as a mouth rinse or for site specific irrigation. Chlorhexidine oral rinses may also be purchased by clients for home use.

POLICY

A written prescription by a dentist or physician is required for the sale of chlorhexidine to a client by a pharmacy. A prescription note must be recorded in the client's record.

In-office use of chlorhexidine by dental hygienists must be supported by a prescription or annotation documented in the client's chart by the prescriber. Documentation for the prescribed use of chlorhexidine should specify whether it is intended for a single appointment or for ongoing appointments (e.g. as a pre-procedural rinse). Following a prescription, the use of chlorhexidine products in-office by a dental hygienist must be documented in the client's chart including product, concentration, and volume. Any chlorhexidine preparations given to a

client for home use must also follow a documented prescription.

If the ability to obtain a prescription for in-office use of chlorhexidine poses a barrier, dental hygienists should select appropriate alternative products that are supported by evidence of effectiveness.

Dental hygienists are expected to provide client-centered care based on each client's individual needs. Client-centered care includes planning interventions and selecting products for use that are evidence-based.

REFERENCES

- Government of British Columbia. Drug Schedules Regulation To The Pharmacy Operations And Drug Scheduling Act Of British Columbia. Victoria: Ministry of Health; 2013. Available from: <http://library.bcpharmacists.org/D-Legislation Standards/D-4 Drug Distribution/5012-Drug Schedules Regulation.pdf>
- Government of Canada. Food and Drugs Act. Ottawa: Justice Laws Website; 2013. Available from: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-27/page-1.html>
- Government of Canada. Prescription Drug List. Ottawa: Health Canada; 2013 Dec 19. Available from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodpharma/pdl-ord/index-eng.php>

Added to Handbook: Prior to June 2004

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