

LAUNDRY PROTOCOLS

Policies and procedures should address the collection, transport, handling, washing and drying of soiled linen, including protection of staff.

There are three ways laundry can be handled at the dental office:

1. LAUNDRY SERVICE

- Follow protocols provided by laundry service

2. IN-OFFICE LAUNDRY

- **Laundry Area**
 - The laundry area should be a dedicated space with a designated covered drop off area for used laundry
 - There needs to be clear separation between clean and dirty laundry through all steps of the laundering process, including transportation and storage
 - Laundry should be completed by designated person and not by clinical staff between patients
 - Clean laundry should be sorted, packaged, transported and stored in a manner that prevents inadvertent handling, contamination by dust or debris, and contact with soiled linens or other soiled or contaminated item
 - Personalize/label all scrubs and lab coats
- **Laundering Process**
 - Scrubs and lab coats should be laundered separately from towels and environmental cleaning items such as cloths or mop heads
 - Handle soiled laundry minimally and ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used
 - Containers shall be waterproof, leak-proof, nonporous, and in good repair, and shall be decontaminated after use
 - Linen bags shall be tied securely and not be over-filled. Reusable linen bags shall be laundered before re-use and can be washed in the same cycle as the linen contained in them
 - Containers or linen bags should be labelled as 'soiled'
 - Before loading the washer with contaminated items, don appropriate PPE
 - Color-safe chlorine bleach or antimicrobial detergent should be used
 - Scrubs and lab coats should be washed with the maximum temperature tolerated by the fabric for a minimum of 25 minutes
 - Laundered items should be taken out of the washer as soon as possible to reduce the risk of contaminating the washer and formation of biofilm
 - Transfer items to the dryer
 - Disinfect the door and lid of the washer after removing attire. This helps prevent the reintroduction of contaminants on clean attire
 - When removing items from the dryer and folding, don appropriate PPE
 - **Do not** use the same PPE when handling soiled items and clean items

- **Team Member Protection**

- Dedicated hand washing sink or alcohol-based hand rub should be readily available in laundry area
- If reusable PPE is used, it shall be cleaned daily at a minimum and designated to the individual
- Replacement of PPE when the integrity is compromised
- Hand hygiene must be performed whenever gloves are changed or removed

3. AT-HOME LAUNDRY

- **Laundry Area**

- There needs to be clear separation between clean and dirty laundry through all steps of the laundering process, including transportation and storage
- Clean laundry should be sorted, packaged, transported and stored in a manner that prevents inadvertent handling

- **Laundering Process**

- Scrubs and lab coats should be laundered separately from household linens
- Handle soiled laundry minimally to avoid contamination
- Containers for soiled linen shall be waterproof, leak-proof, nonporous, and in good repair, and shall be decontaminated after use
- Linen bags shall be tied securely and not be over-filled. Reusable linen bags shall be laundered before re-use and can be washed in the same cycle as the linen contained in them
- Containers or linen bags should be labelled as soiled
- Before loading the washer with contaminated items, don appropriate PPE
- Color-safe chlorine bleach or antibacterial detergent should be used
- Scrubs and lab coats should be washed with the maximum temperature tolerated by the fabric for a minimum of 25 minutes
- Laundered items should be taken out of the washer as soon as possible to reduce the risk of contaminating the washer and formation of biofilm
- Transfer items to the dryer
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- When removing items from the dryer and folding, don appropriate PPE
- **Do not** use the same PPE when handling soiled items and clean items

- **Team Member Protection**

- Dedicated hand washing sink or alcohol-based hand rub should be readily available in laundry area
- If reusable PPE is used, it shall be cleaned daily at a minimum
- Replacement of PPE when the integrity is compromised
- Hand hygiene must be performed whenever gloves are changed or removed

Note: Ensure clinical attire (including footwear) is not worn outside of the dental office.