

The

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Review

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WHMIS, MSDS & Product Labels

Safety First - ALWAYS.

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WHMIS applies to all industries and workplaces in Canada including your dental office. If you use materials that are classified as controlled products under federal legislation, it is necessary to supply labels for all controlled products that do not have them, ensure Material Safety Data Sheets are available and educate and train workers about hazardous materials in the workplace.

The supplier of a product is responsible for determining whether it is a controlled product and to provide you with labels and Material Safety Data Sheets.

Disinfectants like anesthetics, alloys and alginates in your dental office are **exempt** from WHMIS legislation and are regulated by the Food and Drugs Act. Although most suppliers of disinfectants in Canada do provide a Material Safety Data Sheet, the product label provides **all** of the information you require to use the product safely and effectively. All you have to do is take the time to **read the label**.

In Canada, "disinfectants are classified as drugs if the label states in specific terms that the product is intended to be used as a disinfectant on environmental surfaces and other inanimate object for the mitigation or prevention of disease in humans or animals regardless of use sites, places or facilities." The Health Products and Food Branch of Health Canada's mandate is to take an integrated approach to managing the health-related risk and benefits of health products and food by: minimizing health risk factors to Canadians while maximizing the safety provided by the regulatory system for health and food products; and, promoting conditions that enable Canadians to make healthy choices and providing information so that they can make informed decisions about their health.

Consequently, disinfectants you use in your office must be issued a Drug Identification Number by Health Canada. A DIN let's you know that the product has undergone and passed a review of its formulation, labeling and instructions for use – it means that the product is licenced by Health Canada.

Disinfectant labels must give you

- a) Name of the product
- b) Manufacturer of the product
- c) Identity and concentration of each active ingredient
- d) Product's intended use
 - i. claims – bactericide, virucide, fungicide, tuberculocide
 - ii. where the disinfectant is to be used ie; health care facilities
- e) Directions for use
 - i. **need for surface to be cleaned prior to disinfection**
 - ii. personnel that clean items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids should be cautioned to wear appropriate barrier protection, such as disposable gloves, gowns and masks
- f) Precautionary Statements
- g) Lot # and expiry date

The label is Health Canada approved – if there is a discrepancy between the label and the MSDS always choose the label. Health Canada's mandate is to protect your health – if P.P.E. (personal protective equipment) is required as per the label but not the MSDS you should wear personal protective equipment.

Take a look at MSDS's you have in your office. Most have a disclaimer at the bottom...look at the disinfectant labels – there are **no** disclaimers on disinfectant labels registered by Health Canada. Disinfectant labels are the best source of information and provide all of the necessary information to ensure the disinfectant will do what you expect it to do as long as you take the time to read the label.

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS): A Guide to the Legislation; Ontario Ministry of Labour, August 2008
Guidance Document: Disinfectant Drugs, Health Products and Food Branch, Ministry of Health, Canada, October 29, 2007



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