

The following work practice control document is intended to provide an outline of suggested infection control precautions when performing test box measurements for the purpose of minimizing the spread of disease.

Clinicians would be wise to consider a range of infection prevention concepts and work practice controls including but not limited to:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks, gloves, lab coats, and eye protection should be used in accordance with occupational safety guidelines, as well as disease control and prevention guidelines.¹
- Hand hygiene should be practiced: before and after each appointment, after glove removal, and between each audiological task (for example: between otoscopy and handling probe tubes for REM).²
- Use of hospital-grade disinfectants on all items and surfaces that contact the client, as well as on all items and surfaces that may have been contaminated from clinician contact, fluids, or airborne contamination.³



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1. Receive hearing instruments using a contact barrier, such as disinfectant towelettes, tissues or gloves, avoiding direct contact with bare hands and place hearing instruments on a hard surface that can be easily disinfected.
 2. Clean the hearing instruments using tissues, wipes, paper towel or other cleaning methods that remove contaminants.
 3. Disinfect contact surfaces of hearing instruments prior to testing using a disinfectant wipe/towelette.
 4. Attach the hearing instruments to the couplers in the test box using TRIC adapters (RIC and Thin Tube), or HA-4 earmold substitutes (BTEs with earmolds), or blue putty (CIC, ITE, ITCs etc.).
 5. After completing test box measurements, hearing instruments should be transferred using a contact barrier that avoids direct contact with the clinician's hands, and then again disinfected prior to returning them to the patient.
 6. Clean and disinfect test box components used to couple hearing instruments using a disinfectant wipe/towelette, including TRIC adapters, HA-4 earmold substitutes, and hearing instrument stabilizers.
 7. Dispose of blue putty if it may have become contaminated. If blue putty is re-used, it should be stored in a sterilized, sealed container and only ever handled with clean hands or gloves.
 8. Clean and disinfect items that do not typically contact hearing instruments if they may have become contaminated, including the binaural coupler microphone, reference microphones, wireless mouse, monitor headphones, display screen, and the equipment casing.
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References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Protecting Healthcare Personnel. (2014, August 18). Retrieved June 10, 2020 from <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/prevent/ppe.html>
2. Bankaitis, A. (2014). Infection Control: What To Do and How To Do It. Retrieved June 10, 2020 from <https://www.audiologyonline.com/articles/infection-control-what-to-do-12953>
3. American Academy of Audiology. (2019). Infection Control in Audiological Practice. Retrieved June 10, 2020 from <https://www.audiology.org/publications/guidelines-and-standards/infection-control-audiological-practice>

Appendix:

Definition of Infection Control Terms:

- **Cleaning** is the removal of gross contaminants without killing germs. This may be accomplished using methods such as: paper towels or tissues, wipes, brushes, or rinsing with water.
- **Disinfection** is the removal of virtually every pathogenic microorganism, but not necessarily all microbial microorganisms. This may be accomplished using methods such as: disinfectant wipes/towelettes, disinfectant spray and tissues or soaking trays.
- **Sterilization** is the removal of all microbial microorganisms. This may be accomplished using methods such as: cold sterilization with chemical and soaking tray, heat sterilization with an autoclave, or a UVC light emitting cleaning and drying device.

Helpful Resources:

- Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (2020). Infection Prevention and Control Resources for Audiologists. Retrieved June 10, 2020 from <https://www.sac-oac.ca/news-events/news/infection-prevention-and-control-resources-audiologists>
- Government of Canada (2020). Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers (COVID-19): List of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19. Retrieved June 10, 2020 from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). Retrieved June 10, 2020 from <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

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