

The Internet for Dentists

WATERLINES ON THE WEB

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The recent 20/20 news report on dental unit waterlines stimulated a lot of discussion on the quality of the water used in dental offices. This month, we will focus on this issue as a starting point for exploring the Internet.

The Internet's vast structure allows users to find information by searching both within a Web site and over the entire Internet via search engines such as www.yahoo.com or www.altavista.com. Remember that publishing on the Internet is very easy, and that publishers may have a vested interest in the information they present. You should therefore always review the information you find on the Web very carefully. Make sure the articles you use are accurate and your sources, credible.

1. 20/20. This is the television program that started it all. If you think the title of the news report doesn't reveal enough about the program's agenda ("Dirty Dental Water"), take a look at their online report.

http://www.abcnews.go.com/onair/2020/2020_000218_dirtywater_feature.html

2. Canadian Dental Association. The CDA regularly updates its information on issues such as dental unit waterlines. The private members' side of the site contains CDA's guidelines on waterline maintenance, an information sheet with questions and answers, research articles and clinical abstracts from the December *JCDA*.

<http://www.cda-adc.ca>

3. American Dental Association. The public side of the ADA's site contains several documents on the issue of waterlines. Various references are listed to inform

both dentists and the public of what is being done about dental unit waterlines.

<http://www.ada.org/prac/position/lines.html>

4. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC has published various articles on the subject of waterlines. Its current recommendations are listed at the following Web sites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/oh/icbbp.htm#tools>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/oh/backflow.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/oh/icwater.htm>

5. Clinical Research Associates. "CRA (Clinical Research Associates) is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving dentists by evaluating dental materials, devices and concepts for efficacy and clinical usefulness. Findings are reported as rapidly as possible in written and oral forms, including the monthly CRA Newsletter."

<http://www.cranews.com/newsletter/highlights/99-10/index.htm>

<http://www.cranews.com/newsletter/highlights/99-10/fda.htm>

6. Alberta Dental Association. This site offers some useful information about waterline contamination, including the association's position paper (1996) on the subject.

<http://www.abda.ab.ca/pp-water.html>

7. Canaden. The Canaden site was developed by Canadian dentists to foster discussion on the business and practice of dentistry. One feature of the Canaden site is a series of cases on different dental topics. Case 20, entitled "Reactions to Waterline Contamination," is presented by Micrylium, a company that sells solutions to the dental unit waterline problems.

<http://canaden.com/cases/20/case20intro.htm>

8. Organization for Safety and Asepsis Procedures. "The Organization for Safety and Asepsis Procedures (OSAP) is an association of academicians, health care practitioners and industry representatives

concerned about the standards and practice of dental infection control."

<http://www.osap.org/water/wl-wliq.htm>

9. Biomedical Development Corporation. "Biomedical Development Corporation is a for profit business dedicated to the research, development, and commercialization of innovative products in the medical and health care fields." The site contains some research that has been published concerning the waterline issue.

<http://www.biodevcorp.com/abstracts.html>

10. HIVDENT. "HIVDENT is a not-for-profit coalition of concerned health care professionals committed to assuring access to high quality oral health care services for adults, adolescents, and children living with HIV disease."

<http://hivdent.org/infctl/water1.htm>

<http://hivdent.org/infctl/water2.htm>

11. Medline. This Web site will give you a lot of information if you type "dental waterline" in the search box. You can order the articles online.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/>

12. Online Presentation. The University of Iowa College of Dentistry has an online presentation entitled "Microbial Contamination of Dental Waterlines."

<http://research.dentistry.uiowa.edu/osha4/sld001.htm>

Vigorous debate has arisen over the issue of dental unit waterlines. The aforementioned Web sites offer a wide range of information (of varying quality) on the issue. Patients may use the Internet as well as the media to inform themselves, and they will come into contact with documentation that may alarm them. Dentists should keep in touch with their dental associations to obtain guidelines and documentation necessary to meet the needs of the public in a professional manner.

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or official policies of the Canadian Dental Association.
