Laundry Management of dental uniforms

Micro-organisms are able to survive on inanimate surfaces including textiles. In recent years there has been an increased interest of healthcare textiles being a potential source of transmission with the rise in Healthcare associated infections (HCAI's) and antibiotic resistant bacteria (Laird et al 2018). Uniforms in healthcare usually are taken home for domestic laundering. Domestic laundering guidelines should be encompassed in your policies & procedures. The Department of Health (DH) have previously produced guidance on uniform & workwear policies for NHS employers (2010).

- Have a Laundering policy for uniforms in place.
- Sufficient provision of uniform should be supplied for staff to allow laundering after each wear.
- Wear appropriate PPE when carrying out aerosol generated procedures.
- Educate staff to maintain good practice.

It is advised all staff wear disposable aprons for all aerosol generated procedures as well as for decontamination processes to minimise contamination to uniform.

- Micro-organisms are able to survive on inanimate surfaces including textiles.
- A study showed Bacteria survived on polyester for up to 7 days & cotton for up to 21 days.
- Studies also found cross-transmission during washing at 40 degrees C.

Studies have shown there is no significant difference in the activity of biological and non- biological detergents against micro-organisms at similar wash temperature conditions.

- Use a minimum temperature of 60 degrees C for a minimum of 10 minutes.
- Uniforms pre washed store separately from other items.
- Washed separately to other clothing using a detergent.
- Launder after every shift.

DH guidance: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130124054344/http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_114754.pdf

Further reading: Laird K et al (2018) Domestic laundering of nurses' uniforms: what are the risks? Nursing Times [online]; 114: 2, 18-21.

Please contact the Infection Control Team if you require any additional advice/support on 01744 457314/457312