



Health and  
Wellness

Santé et  
Mieux-être



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## **How to Choose a Disinfectant for a Personal Service Facility**

Disinfectants come in varying strengths and are applied according to the type of surface or instrument used. Choosing the right disinfectant can be confusing; the information below will help to determine what level of disinfectant to use and how to identify it.

The use of a disinfectant which does not comply with the *Guidelines for Personal Services* may be restricted by an Environmental Health Officer (EHO). It is best practice to discuss which disinfectants are appropriate for your facility with an EHO.

When using a chemical disinfectant, it is important to follow the manufacturer's written directions. All products used as a disinfectant must have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or a Medical Device License (MDL). Foreign approvals (FDA, EPA, etc.) are not recognized in Canada.

### **LOW-LEVEL DISINFECTANTS**

Low-level disinfectants (LLD) are suitable for non-critical instruments and equipment which do not touch the client directly or only come in contact with intact skin. When selecting a low-level disinfectant, the manufacturer's label must contain a DIN or MDL and a general disinfectant claim. Low level disinfectants can be easily found in retail stores.

### **INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL DISINFECTANTS**

Intermediate-level disinfectants (ILD) are suitable for non-critical instruments and equipment which are intended to contact intact skin but may accidentally contact non-intact skin. When selecting an intermediate-level disinfectant, the manufacturer's label must contain a DIN or MDL, a general disinfectant claim and a tuberculocide or mycobactericide claim. Intermediate-level disinfectants can be easily found in cosmetic, dental, medical supply or janitorial stores.

### **HIGH-LEVEL DISINFECTANTS**

High-level disinfectants (HLD) are suitable for semi-critical instruments and equipment which are intended to contact non-intact skin or a mucous membrane, but do not penetrate it. When selecting a high-level disinfectant, the manufacturer's label must contain a DIN or MDL, a general disinfectant claim and a tuberculocide claim and specifically state high-level disinfectant, chemical sterilant or sporicidal.

*Some products are not acceptable for disinfection.  
Ultraviolet (UV) “sterilizers” do not achieve disinfection and  
boiling is unreliable.*

**FACILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- Use personal protective equipment as needed (gloves, aprons, masks, etc.).
- Instruments and equipment must be thoroughly cleaned before disinfection. Make sure to have appropriate scrubbing tools onsite for cleaning.
- Prepare, maintain and dispose of solutions according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Make sure you have appropriate labeled containers for soaking instruments. The label should contain the name of the disinfectant, the contact time and the date it expires.
- Completely submerge instruments and equipment in the disinfectant for the required contact time as per the manufacturer’s directions.
- Avoid prolonged soaking.
- Allow enough counter space to properly clean, rinse, disinfect and dry instruments and equipment.
- Handle disinfected items with clean hands.
- Air dry on a lint free surface and store in a manner to prevent re-contamination.
- Have the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) information for each chemical used onsite at all times and easily accessible to employees.

Stronger is not always better. It is important to choose the right disinfectant and to use it properly.

**HOW TO CHOOSE A DISINFECTANT – SUMMARY TABLE**

Disinfectant Level	Information Required to be on the Chemical Label			
	DIN or MDL	General Disinfectant Claim	Tuberculocidal or Mycobacterium	Sporicidal, Chemical Sterilant or HLD
Low-Level	X	X		
Intermediate-Level	X	X	X	
High-Level	X	X	X	X

For more information please contact the Environmental Health Office at:  
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