

Contamination of Computer Keyboards (9/03)

Bacterial contamination of computer keyboards in a teaching hospital. Schultz M, Gill J, Zubairi S, Huber R, Gordin F. Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol 2003;24:302-303.

Recently computers have become more prevalent in the health-care settings. This study was undertaken to evaluate the extent of contamination on computer keyboards in the acute care, ambulatory care, and long-term care areas of a Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Of 100 cultures performed, 95 had growth of one or more microorganisms. Most were positive for skin organisms (e.g., coagulase-negative *Staphylococcus*, *Bacillus* species, or *Corynebacterium* species). Five percent were positive for pathogens known to be associated with nosocomial transmission. **Computer equipment must be kept clean so it does not become another vehicle for transmission of pathogens to patients.**



DIS Comment: The introduction of computers in dental treatment areas presents unique infection control challenges. Avoiding contamination is important because many items cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected or sterilized. Before touching any office equipment, ensure your hands are clean, and if wearing gloves select a powder-free brand. A computer keyboard and mouse are excellent examples of difficult, if not impossible, equipment to clean. They should be covered with a barrier when contamination is likely, and changed between patients. If a reusable form-fitted barrier is used, it should be cleaned and disinfected between patients.