Question Your Dentist About Potential for Cross-Contamination, Leading Infection-Control Scientist Tells Fox News

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CHARLOTTE, N.C., July 25, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- A leading international scientist in the field of infection control is urging patients to ask their dentists about the potential for cross-contamination in the dental office, specifically from reused chains and holders that fasten patients' protective bibs in place.

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Research by Dr. John Molinari, Director of Infection Control for *The Dental Advisor*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, determined that reused bib chains contained about 1,000 times more bacteria than disposable or sterilized chains.

"Bacteria from (dental) patients' mouths transfers on to surfaces through the air from aerosols from air and water syringe sprays or gloved hands in people's mouths and then touching other items," Dr. Molinari tells Fox News in a July 15 report headlined, "Gross Out ... At the Dentist's Office."

Molinari's research echos at least two other recent studies. Fox News health columnist Colleen Cappon also cites a study from the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry which found that one out of five bib chains tested were contaminated with bacteria, including traces of Staphylococcus aureus and E. coli. The majority of bacteria growth was attributed to saliva, dental plaque, skin and flesh.

Cappon also references the work of Noel Kelsch, former president of the California Dental Hygienists' Association, whose own study was published in a recent issue of *Infection Control Today*.

"The more crevices and indentations on a clip or a chain, the higher the contaminant count," Kelsch tells Cappon.

Those contaminants, Cappon reports, can mean trouble for patients.

"The Centers for Disease Control defines cross-contamination as the act of spreading bacteria and viruses from one surface to another," Cappon writes. "Blood-borne viruses have the ability t
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