

# **Dental Nurse Survival Guide**

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**Series editor**

Dr John Fowler

**Note**

*Healthcare practice and knowledge are constantly changing and developing as new research and treatments, changes in procedures, drugs and equipment become available.*

*The author and publishers have, as far as is possible, taken care to confirm that the information complies with the latest standards of practice and legislation.*

# **Dental Nurse Survival Guide**

*by*

**Kathryn Porter**

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# Contents

<b>About the author</b>	vi
<b>Introduction</b>	vii
<b>Section 1: Clinical Practice</b>	
<b>Chapter 1:</b> <i>Dealing with medical emergencies</i>	1
<b>Chapter 2:</b> <i>Dealing with dental emergencies</i>	19
<b>Chapter 3:</b> <i>Dealing with daily practice</i>	25
<b>Chapter 4:</b> <i>Preventing cross infection</i>	37
<b>Chapter 5:</b> <i>Radiology</i>	51
<b>Chapter 6:</b> <i>Role in the care of patients during treatment</i>	61
<b>Chapter 7:</b> <i>Role in telling patients bad news</i>	83
<b>Section 2: Professional Practice</b>	
<b>Chapter 8:</b> <i>Professional practice requirements and CPD</i>	87
<b>Chapter 9:</b> <i>The dental practice team and culture</i>	105
<b>Index</b>	111

# About the author

Kathryn (Kathy) Porter recently retired from dental nursing in 2011 having started her training in September 1968 at Birmingham Dental Hospital and qualifying in 1970. Apart from a short time working in the dental department of a large industrial complex, she has worked at Birmingham Dental Hospital until her retirement. She was appointed Senior Dental Nurse in 1973 and promoted to Assistant Principal Dental Nurse in 1989. In 2007 her job title changed to Senior Dental Nurse (Decontamination).

Kathy trained as an Infection Control Link Nurse, now known as Infection Prevention and Control Link Practitioner, in 2003 and this began her keen interest in infection control and decontamination good practice. After being invited to sit on the Editorial Board of *Dental Nursing* in 2005, Kathy began to write articles on the subject of infection prevention and control and was also invited to write a book *The Dental Nurses' Guide to Infection Control and Decontamination* which was published in 2008. Although published before the notorious *Health Technical Memorandum 01-05*, her book proposes the same, and even higher standards, than those outlined in the HTM 01-05 document, and has become recommended for all dental nurses and dental care professionals (DCPs) as a point of reference on the topic. Kathy has given talks on the subject in various venues to provide verifiable continuing professional development for all DCPs.

Kathy intends to enjoy her retirement, pursuing her interests in travelling, watching Wimbledon, investigating her family tree and generally enjoying being 'a lady that lunches', and fully enjoy the freedom after 42 years of full time work.

# Introduction

Gaining your qualification and becoming registered is just the start for any Dental Nurse or Dental Care Professional (DCP).

You have learnt all that theory and gained practical experience and you are now a qualified and registered DCP. Suddenly you are expected to know what to do in any situation. Where do you go for advice? What do you turn to if you need answers immediately?

This *Survival Guide Series* aims to be the resource that will help answer those questions. It is designed to be small, with short brief answers to some questions and scenarios which will give immediate help.

I have tried to cover the most common situations but I am sure that I have missed some but hopefully these will be the exception rather than the rule. What is important is that you do not do anything outside your scope of practice and experience. The General Dental Council (GDC) has produced a *Scope of Practice* for DCP's which sets out what DCP's can, and cannot, do in professional practice. You should be fully conversant with these and should not undertake any duty or practice which falls outside this scope no matter who asks you to do so.

It is a fact that there is no substitute for experience and as you gain this experience, the problems and scenarios in this book will become routine, however there will be more to take their place.

Newly qualified nurses should not be embarrassed to ask their more experienced colleagues for help. Any experienced nurse will be only too happy to pass on their knowledge. Dentistry is about working as a team and the role of dental nurses are central to this. No dental practice or facility can work without a good team of dental nurses.

## References:

General Dental Council (2008) *Scope of Practice for Dental Care Professionals*

