VAH LIST OF DISINFECTANTS

A list of procedures issued by the Disinfectants Commission in the Association for Applied Hygiene (VAH) in collaboration with the Scientific Societies and Professional Associations DGHM, DGKH, GHUP, DVG, BVÖGD and BDH tested according to the DGHM Standard Methods for Testing Chemical Disinfection Processes and deemed to be effective for prophylactic disinfection and hygienic handwash.

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General Information

This List is an inventory of all procedures which had a valid certificate as of 15 April 2009. The exact validity dates can be directly requested from the manufacturer or can be viewed in VAH’s interactive database at www.vah-online.de.

Issuance of certificates and listing of disinfection procedures were carried out by the Disinfectants Commission in the Association for Applied Hygiene (Verbund für Angewandte Hygiene e. V. (VAH) (Prof. M. Exner, M. D., Chairman; Department of Hygiene, Bonn University, Sigmund-Freud-Strasse 25, 53127 Bonn, Germany). The List is compiled by the Association for Applied Hygiene in collaboration with the following scientific societies and professional associations: German Society for Hygiene and Microbiology (DGHM), German Society for Hospital Hygiene (DGKH), German Society of Hygiene, Environmental and Public Health Sciences (GHUP), German Society of Veterinary Medicine (DVG), Federal Association of Physicians in Public Health (BVÖGD), Federal Association of German Infection Control Physicians (BDH).

The certificates were issued on the basis of two expert opinions that provided proof of the disinfectant action of the preparation in the specified concentrations and for the contact times given for the respective application. These expert opinions were reviewed by the Commission and accepted if they met the provisions of the guidelines formulated by the Disinfectants Commission [1, 2], the Catalogue of Requirements [3] or the transitional provisions [4] as well as pertinent communications on test requirements published in the journal “Hygiene + Medizin” (Infection Control and Healthcare).

The “DGHM Standard Methods for Testing Chemical Disinfection Processes” [2] were published reflecting the valid status as per 1 September 2001. The evaluation details for test results conducted as per these Standard Methods are summarised in the “Catalogue of Requirements for Including Chemical Disinfection Processes in the DGHM List of Disinfectants”; Issue: 4 February 2002 [3]. This approach meant that the stock of knowledge valid at that time and the methods based on European standardization endeavours in CEN TC 216 were integrated into the activities of the Disinfectants Commission and extended by the principle of efficacy limit value ascertainment.

But bringing these methods into line with the prevailing state of knowledge in Europe also meant that the disinfection processes are now evaluated differently, especially those products used for surface and instrument disinfection. Adaptation to European standards ushered in test challenges (clean and dirty conditions) as well as other test organisms for the novel test methods.

As of 1 January 2007 only those procedures are listed for which proof of at least one complete test report and one expert report could be furnished as per the Catalogue of Requirements from 2002 [3] or which had furnished proof of efficacy in a supplementary test protocol according to the transitional provisions [4].

The preparations are listed solely on the basis of the criteria specified above. Registration and licensing procedures, such as those stipulated by the German Medicinal Products Act (AMG) or the German Medical Devices Act (MPG), were not taken into consideration.

The manufacturers or distributors have issued binding statements that the preparations are marketed only in the formulations in which they were tested for acceptance in the List.

This List of Disinfectants serves as the basis for selection of appropriate disinfection procedures for routine and prophylactic disinfection to prevent infections in hospitals, medical and dental

Members of the VAH Disinfectant Commission:

Prof. Dr. M. Borneff-Lipp (Vice-Chairwoman), Dr. H. Burghardt (BW Guest), Dr. B. Christiansen, Prof. Dr. Th. Eikmann, Prof. Dr. M. Exner (Chairman), Dr. J. Gebel (Secretary), Prof. Dr. P. Heeg, Prof. Dr. V. Hingst, Prof. Dr. A. Kramer, Prof. Dr. H. Martiny, Priv.-Doz. Dr. F. Pitten, Priv.-Doz. Dr. G. Schrader, Prof. Dr. R. Schubert, Dr. J. Schwebke (RKI Guest), Dr. J. Steinmann, Prof. Dr. U. Truyen (DVG Guest), Prof. Dr. C. Wendt, Prof. Dr. M. H. Wolff
surgeries, public areas (children’s daycare centres, schools, sporting establishments, etc.) and other areas in which infections may be transmitted. By using VAH listed products, establishments meet the quality assurance requirements stipulated by infection control regulations at state (Länder) level.

For statutorily mandated disinfection procedures, please consult the Infection Control Act (IfSG) of 20 July 2000 [5] and the List of Disinfectants of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) [6].

In the interest of standardisation, the VAH List takes account only of the disinfectant ingredients as declared by the manufacturer. To facilitate orientation, the products are classified according to the following active substance groups: aldehydes, aldehyde releasing agents, alcohols, alkylamines or alkylamine derivatives, amphoterics, compounds releasing chlorine, bromine or iodine, chloramines, glycol derivatives, guanidines or guanidine derivatives, bases, peroxide compounds, phenol derivatives, phenol ethers, pyridine derivatives, quaternary compounds, inorganic acids, organic acids or heavy metal compounds. The active ingredients and the trademark symbols® are listed according to the specifications of the manufacturers and distributors.

When their products are accepted, the manufacturers and distributors are required to declare on the label the quantity of each active ingredient. The listing of a preparation applies only to the specified application process. Any change of the formulation of a listed product must be reported to the Chairman of the Disinfectants Commission. In such cases the Commission will decide whether, and to what extent, new tests are required.

The Disinfectants Commission reserves the right to undertake further tests if new developments in the testing methodology or regarding the efficacy of particular products come to light. Moreover, it reserves the right to withdraw the corresponding certificate in the event of evidence of no, or insufficient, efficacy.

When their products are accepted, the manufacturers and distributors are required to state the listed disinfection values on the label, in the instructions for use, and in advertising prospectuses if they make reference to testing according to the “Guidelines” or “Standard Methods” (“tested and found effective”) or to the List. Reference may be made to the “Guidelines” or “Standard Methods” only if the specified concentration/contact-time relationships are in complete agreement with the “Requirements” [2]. Testing of the listed processes refers only to the disinfectant action. No statements are made about other characteristics of the products, such as skin compatibility, corrosive or cleansing effects.

The disinfectant action of many preparations is impaired in the presence of organic material (e.g., blood, wound secretions, mucus). Therefore the recommendations given here for the respective applications must not be unconditionally applied to other procedures, such as mucous membranes and wound antisepsis or irrigation of body cavities.

As a general rule, freshly prepared working solutions must be used, if they are not already available as such (‘ready-to-use products’). This rule must always be observed for disinfectants based on peroxide compounds and for chlorine releasing agents since they are not stable (follow instructions given by the manufacturer).

The concentrations specified in the List must be exactly observed. Under no circumstances should what is known as a ‘shot method’ be used. Nor should users add a detergent, e.g., soap or wash-active substances, to the disinfectant at their own discretion (soap effects).

Cleaning and Disinfection Procedures

The List is divided into the following sections on the basis of practical requirements:

- **Hygienic handwash**
  - Disinfection procedures.
- **Hand disinfection**
- **Skin antisepsis (skin disinfection)**
- **Surface disinfection**
- **Instrument disinfection**
- **Linen disinfection**

Detailed information on the test criteria for the individual procedures is given in the respective section.

References