

**Less COSHH-fusion,
more clarity**

A practical compliance self-check for dental practices

COSHH in a dental practice can feel like a lot. Shelves of products, safety data sheets, and the constant question of 'are we doing this right?'. From disinfectants and cleaning chemicals to materials used chairside and in decontamination, this guide is here to help you get your head around the basics. It highlights the key things to think about, the common areas practices often miss, and where you might need a bit more structure or support.

It doesn't cover everything, but it's a practical starting point to help you feel more confident and in control of COSHH day to day.

Spot the substances

First things first:

take a walk around your practice (yes, really).

Ask yourself:

- What chemicals are used clinically?
- What cleaning products are used?
- What's stored under sinks, in cupboards even the ones you don't open normally?
- Have you poured something from a large container into a smaller spray bottle? If so, have you clearly labelled it with the product name and hazard symbols?

TOP TIP:

Internal spot checks help catch unassessed or out of date products before an inspector does!

Make a list. This is your COSHH inventory.

Decide what needs a COSHH assessment

Not every product needs a full COSHH risk assessment, but **every hazardous substance** needs documentation.

- **Hazardous substances** → COSHH Risk Assessment required
- **Low-risk substances** → Safety Data Sheet (SDS) still required

If in doubt, err on the side of caution (inspectors love that).

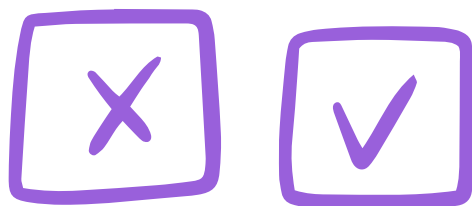
Find the Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

Every product should come with a Safety Data Sheet from the manufacturer.

Check that:

- It's the **current version** if the ingredient changes mean new safety data sheets.
- It matches the **exact product name**, keep your eye out for cheeky substitutions.
- It's accessible to staff and not too heavy! Spread it over two folders if you need to and don't forget about your cleaners.
- If your cleaners bring their own products, do they have an accessible COSHH file?

Digital or paper is fine as long as team members can find it.



Complete the COSHH risk assessment

This doesn't need to be painful. A good COSHH assessment answers:

- What is the substance?
- Who could be harmed?
- How could harm occur?
- What controls are already in place?
- What more needs to be done?

Controls might include:

- PPE
- Ventilation
- Safe storage
- Staff training
- Clear instructions

Keep it **clear, realistic, and practice specific.**

Train, don't just file

A COSHH assessment isn't complete until staff understand it.

Make sure:

- New starters know where COSHH records are.
- Staff know how to use substances safely.
- PPE isn't just decorative.

A quick refresh during your practice meeting will go a long way.

Review, review, review

COSHH assessments are living documents.

Review them when:

- A product changes.
- A process changes.
- New equipment is introduced.
- There's an incident or near miss.

1 Year minimum review: annually even if nothing changes.

Final thought

COSHH isn't about paperwork it's about protecting your team, your patients, and your practice.

And once it's set up properly?

**It's mostly just maintenance.
Promise.**

If you have any questions or need further support please contact us



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