

# British dentists warned of vCJD risk

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British dentists are being told not to re-use dental instruments from root canals because it could put patients at risk for mad cow disease.

Britain's Chief Dental Officer, Dr. Barry Cockcroft, said dentists should not re-use reamers and files, which are used to to remove dead or damaged tissue from the nerve canal.

He said the instruments are very hard to clean and could put patients at risk, The London Telegraph reported Friday.

Britain's National Health Service conducts about a million root canals each year. The newspaper said the number of people carrying the vCJD infection in Britain is estimated at between one in 1,400 and one in 20,000 people.

Cockcroft said other commonly used equipment such as saliva ejectors and aspirator tips should also be discarded after each patient.

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