

Cleaning Instruments

What is cleaning?

- Cleaning is the process of removing dirt and debris left on the surface of instruments and equipment, allowing the disinfectant or sterilant to work effectively.
- **Cleaning must occur prior to disinfection or sterilization.**
- Cleaning involves the use of soap/detergent, water and friction or can involve the use of an ultrasonic cleaner.

You do not have to see blood or body fluids on instruments for an infection to occur.

The Cleaning Process:

1. Pre-soak items immediately after use, in a basin of cool water with or without detergent.
2. Thick rubber gloves should be used to protect your hands.
3. Take instruments apart (if applicable) and rinse under warm running water. Hot water will bind body proteins to instruments.
4. Ensure the sink is cleaned and then disinfected with a low level disinfectant before using.
5. Add warm water and detergent to the sink. Keep the instruments visible to avoid puncturing your hands.
6. Clean with a small brush using a scrubbing motion. Scrub below the water surface to prevent splashing, especially into the eyes. Ultrasonic cleaners may be used but must be operated with the lid on to prevent aerosolization of liquids.
7. Inspect instruments to ensure removal of all visible organic matter.
8. Drain dirty water. Thoroughly rinse each item with clean warm running water.
9. Air dry or dry with a single-use towel. Ensure instruments are completely dry before storing to prevent a film being left on the surface (biofilm), which contains microorganisms.
10. Store clean, dry instruments in a clean, covered container until the instruments can be disinfected or sterilized.
11. Remove rubber gloves. Wash, rinse and hang gloves to dry. Cleaned rubber gloves may be re-used as long as there are no punctures or tears.
12. Wash hands thoroughly using liquid soap and warm water. Refer to the hand washing poster for the proper hand washing procedure.



Environmental Help Line
905-723-3818 or 1-888-777-9613
durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-888-777-9613.

