

Hand Instrument Care

Stainless Steel Hand Instruments

Although stainless steel is very resistant to corrosion, it is important that proper hand instrument care procedures are followed throughout the sterilization process. Proper hand instrument care ultimately prolongs the life of the product.

- Separate stainless steel instruments from carbon steel, anodized aluminum, titanium nitride instruments and any carbide products during the sterilization process. This means that instruments of a different composition should be handled separately during the entire process including ultrasonic cleaning, dishwasher use, bagging or wrapping of instruments and cassette use. Combining instruments can cause cross-corrosion on the stainless steel instruments.
- It is recommended that instruments be thoroughly rinsed and completely dry before wrapping or placing in a sterilization pouch. Failure to following these strict instrument care procedures may result in pitting, spotting and discoloration of instruments.

Chemicals that effect Stainless Steel

Stainless steel will discolor and corrode if exposed to high concentrations of the following chemicals:

- Sodium Hypochlorite (bleach)
- Stain and Tartar remover
- Aluminum Chloride
- Barium Chloride
- Bichloride of Mercury
- Calcium Chloride
- Carbolic Acid
- Chlorinated Lime
- Citric Acid
- Ferrous Chloride
- Lysol®
- Mercury Salts
- Phenol
- Stannous Chloride
- Hydrochloric Acid
- Iodine

Hinged Instruments

- All hinged instruments (forceps, rongeurs, pliers, hemostats) should be cleaned thoroughly before sterilization.
- Dry thoroughly in open position to remove all water and chemicals.
- Do not allow hinged instruments to remain in water or steam moisture. This can cause discoloration, spotting and effect instrument performance.
- Lubricant sprays and oils will prevent rust, corrosion and stiff joints. Routine lubrication ensures continued smooth performance.
- Autoclaving is the preferred method of sterilization. Use only autoclaves that have temperature, pressure, and liquid- and dry-utensil-cycle controls.
- Steam sterilizers and vertical autoclaves are not recommended because the temperature cannot be held constant.