



# inFocus

## SURGICAL INSTRUMENT CARE



### **The A, B, C's of Surgical Instrument Care**

#### **A - SURGERY**

Within 10 minutes after surgery, the instruments should begin the washing process. Keep contaminated (bloodied) instruments moist so blood does not dry on the instruments, by placing a moist towel over them or using an instrument pre-cleaning solution (Instrument Cleaners p77).

#### **B - Washing**

Wash instruments with a neutral pH soap (Instrument Cleaners p77). Do not use iodine, dish soap, laundry soap, chlorhexidine solution or surgeon's hand scrub. Using these products will cause spotting and corrosion of surgical instruments. Using an instrument cleaning brush (Cleaning Brush p76), brush out hemostat jaw serrations and hinged area. When cleaning needle holders, brush out jaw and hinged area. When cleaning Adson Forceps, brush out teeth and serrations on handle.

#### **C - Ultrasonic**

If an Ultrasonic unit is available, place instruments in Ultrasonic for 10 minutes using a neutral pH solution (Instrument Cleaners p77). Ultrasonic machines clean 16 times more efficiently than hand washing.

#### **D - Rinse**

Rinse with distilled water –(optional)

#### **E - Drying**

Place instruments on a towel with ratchets open and towel dry. Allowing instruments to air dry causes water spots and minor rusting.

#### **F - Lubrication**

After instruments are dry, spray with a lubricant (Instrument Lubricant p76) on the open instrument. Limit the use of white lubricants baths, as they have a tendency to be contaminated and need to be changed often. Avoid using mineral-based lubricants.

#### **G - Sterilisation**

All Instruments should be sterilized with the ratchets open. This allows better steam penetration and prevents cracking of the box lock. If putting instruments in a pan or tray, use a perforated pan or tray, which allows better steam penetration and more effective drying. Pack heavy instruments on bottom, and lighter, more delicate instruments, on the top. If sterilising in paper/plastic pouches, do not stack pouches on the top of one another during sterilisation.

#### **Is it rust or a stain???**

In the event that a brown/orange coloured stain appears on an instrument, use a pencil eraser to determine the source of the discolouration. If the discolouration is removed with the eraser and the metal underneath the discolouration is smooth and clean, this is a stain. If a pit mark appears under the discolouration this is corrosion and/or rust. Use an instrument stain remover (Instrument Cleaner Surgistain p77) to remove stubborn stains.