



In the operating room, place contaminated reusable instruments in a leakproof, puncture-resistant container for transport to the processing area.



Always wear heavy-duty, puncture-resistant gloves when handling contaminated instruments.



Rinse away holding solution before transferring instruments to an automated cleaning device.



Use automated instrument cleaning methods, such as ultrasonic cleaners (above) or instrument washers.



Always run the ultrasonic cleaner with the lid in place to reduce contaminated aerosols and droplets.

Cleaning Reusable Patient-Care Items and Instruments

Ultrasonic cleaner

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for type and volume of solution to use, operation, cycle times, and maintenance.
- Load the tank, being careful not to overload. Overloading can compromise cleaning performance and damage the unit.
- Place the lid on the unit for the duration of the cycle.
- If indicated by the manufacturer, rinse loose instruments or cassettes after the cycle.
- Inspect instruments for remaining debris. If necessary, handscrub to remove.
- Allow instruments to air dry, or carefully pat them dry with several thicknesses of towels.
NOTE: Utility gloves must still be in place to reduce the risk of injury. Clean instruments are still considered contaminated with potentially infectious microorganisms. *Never* rub instruments dry.
- Proceed with processing by packaging instruments for sterilization, sterilizing instruments, and storing/distributing them at chairside (see next page).

Instrument Washer

- Load the chamber so the water will come into contact with all surfaces.
- Turn on the machine and select the desired program cycle, then start the cycle.
- After the cycle is complete, partially open the door (about 4 in. / 10 cm) for 10-15 min. to allow contents to cool down.
- Proceed with processing (see next page).
NOTE: Utility gloves must still be in place to reduce the risk of injury. Clean instruments are still considered contaminated with potentially infectious microorganisms.

Handscrubbing

- Use a long-handled brush and a detergent that is not corrosive.
- Place instruments low in the sink under running water. To ensure that you have the best control, clean no more than one or two instruments at a time, holding the instruments away from the sharp ends.
- Inspect instruments for remaining debris. If necessary, scrub again.
- Allow instruments to air dry, or carefully pat them dry with several layers of towel.
NOTE: Utility gloves must still be in place to reduce the risk of injury. Clean instruments are still considered contaminated with potentially infectious microorganisms. *Never* rub instruments dry.
- Proceed with reprocessing by packaging instruments for sterilization, sterilizing instruments, and storing/distributing them at chairside (see next page).