

Surgical Instrument Care Guide

Six steps to success



National Veterinary Services

1 Pre-cleaning



- Begin the washing process within 10 minutes of finishing surgery
- Keep contaminated instruments moist to prevent bioburden hardening onto your instruments
- If you are just too busy, use an enzymatic, post-surgical wetting agent to safely start the cleaning process
- Instruments must be processed within 24hrs following application

2 Cleaning & Inspection



- Wash instruments with a neutral pH instrument cleaner. The use of hand scrub solutions can cause spotting and corrosion
- Using an instrument cleaning brush, brush outwards from serrations and hinges
- Rinse thoroughly
- When cleaning the instruments, check them over for cracks, broken tips, faulty ratchets, missing screws and springs, worn jaws and missing inserts
- The use of instrument stain removers will remove mineral staining, rust, pitting and corrosion from stainless steel

3 Ultrasonic Cleaning



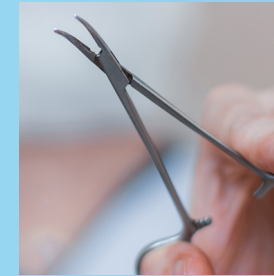
- Place instruments in an ultrasonic machine for 10 – 20 minutes using a neutral pH solution
- Ultrasonic machines clean 16 times more thoroughly than hand washing alone
- Remember not to overload the machine

4 Rinsing & Drying



- After cleaning in the ultrasonic machine, rinse instruments with clean or distilled water
- Place all instruments on a towel with ratchets open, blotting off any excess water with a towel
- Leaving instruments to air dry will cause water spots and minor rusting

5 Lubrication



- Once dry, spray the open instruments with lubricant on hinges and joints
- Surgical instrument lubricants are water based, avoid using mineral or silicone based lubricants as these interfere with steam sterilisation

6 Sterilisation



- Sterilise all instruments with the hinges and ratchets in the open position to allow full steam penetration, preventing cracking of the hinge area
- Place heavier instruments on the bottom shelves and lighter more delicate instruments on the top
- Do not stack sterilisation pouches on top of one another during sterilisation
- Use a perforated tray for effective steam penetration

For more detailed information visit the Decontamination & Sterilisation area on www.nvsweb.co.uk

