

Instructions for Cleaning Stainless Steel Medical Equipment

Introduction

The attractive and hygienic surface appearance of stainless steel products cannot be regarded as completely maintenance free. All grades and finishes of stainless steel may in fact stain, discolor or attain an adhering layer of grime in normal service. To achieve maximum corrosion resistance the surface of the stainless steel must be kept clean. Provided the grade, condition and surface finish were correctly selected for the particular service environment, fabrication and installation procedures were correct and that cleaning schedules are carried out regularly, good performance and long life will be achieved. Frequency and cost of cleaning of stainless steel is lower than for many other materials and this will often out-weigh higher acquisition costs.

Cleaning Methods

Stainless steel is easy to clean. Washing with soap or a mild detergent and warm water followed by a clean water rinse is usually quite adequate for most medical equipment. Use a soft brush or cloth to remove stubborn dirt or blood. Do not use abrasive clothes or pads that will alter the finish of the stainless steel. An enhanced appearance will be achieved if the cleaned surface is finally wiped dry. We do not recommend using a cart washer for stainless steel equipment unless it is specifically rated for using in a cart washer. This can damage wheel bearings, parts glued on may release due to heat and water may be retained on some pieces of equipment. This can void manufacturer's warranty.

Sterilization

Most stainless steel equipment does not need to be sterilized as it is usually not in direct contact with surgical instruments. If stainless steel is required to be sterilized, please check with sterilization equipment manufacturers for settings as equipment cycles vary.

Disinfecting

After stainless steel has been cleaned, you will want to disinfect before use. This is best done with disposable wipes not containing chlorine bleach. If bleach wipes are used, you will need to do a final rinse with clean water to remove the bleach residue as it will cause the stainless steel to have a cloudy finish or white residue over time. We recommend using Super Sani-Cloth® Germicidal Disposable Wipes to disinfect stainless steel medical equipment.