

General Cleaning/Sterilization Practices

Most hospital infection committees insist that any part which can cause cross-contamination between patients be either sterilized or discarded after use. Follow the regulations for *your* institution.

If you don't already know, find out!

Elevated heat, chemicals and sterilizing gases reduce the life of plastic products.

Good cleaning practices involve the following steps:

DISASSEMBLE AND PREWASH: This step allows the removal of particulate matter, and allows the surface to be cleaned (and if necessary, sterilized).

The one-way valves should be completely disassembled so the valve flaps and diaphragms can be thoroughly cleaned and dried. They can be disassembled without tools, washed, dried and then reassembled. It is recommended that any opposing surfaces be *lightly* greased and the valve reassembled for storage, to prevent misplacing the components.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION: Strict attention should be paid to temperature and chemicals used for the sterilization of plastic ware. Do not use temperatures at or exceeding 45°C or 113°F on plastic products. Thus, autoclaving must be avoided. Chemicals such as denatured alcohol or alcohol based solutions, or solvents such as acetone and all hydrocarbons should not be used. They may permanently fog, crack or discolor plastics and may also adversely affect your patient samples and/or our instrumentation when analyzed.

Mild soap (detergent) and warm water are particularly useful for cleaning plastic. Cold-sterilization solutions, such as Benz-All[®], Cidex[®], Sporicidin[®], Metricide[®] or Glutarex[®] are acceptable disinfectants which should not damage plastic ware under ordinary use, though they may cause wrinkling and/or discoloration of rubber valve flaps, and, thus require their replacement.

RINSE AND DRY: The rinse procedure is important. Sterile water is recommended for rinsing after sterilization. Following adequate cleaning without sterilization, a distilled water rinse is recommended, but this is impractical in many laboratories.

A thorough drying is necessary. The valves and components are dried best in a warm-air oven kept below the temperature limit (45°C/113°F). Thorough drying of the pieces minimizes the multiplication of bacteria on the plastic ware.

INSPECT AND PACKAGE FOR STORAGE: After each cleaning, inspect and verify that the item is clean and dry, and that it has not been deformed or cracked in the cleaning process. They should be reassembled and checked for proper function, then packaged appropriately for storage or reuse, according to your institution's protocol.

CLEANING LAMINATED BAGS: QuinTron's gas-impermeable bags can be cleaned on the external surface with soap and water and/or by wiping with a damp cloth. Its outer surface is not ordinarily sterilized.

No method is known which will guarantee to clean and sterilize the inside of the bag. You should replace the bag if it is suspected of being contaminated.

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