



Practice Briefs

What is the recommendation for cleaning the brushes used when cleaning equipment in the sterile processing department, or when high level disinfecting equipment?

The American National Standard addresses brushes very clearly:

“Brushes and other cleaning implements should be cleaned and decontaminated as recommended by the manufacturer at least daily or, preferably, after each use. Whenever possible, single-use brushes and other cleaning implements should be used and then disposed of afterwards.

Worn brushes should be discarded. Reusable brushes should be cleaned after each use and disinfected or sterilized at least once a day.

Brushes should be checked for visible soil and damage following each use and should be frequently cleaned and disinfected. Brushes should be stored clean and dry.”

The rationale is stated that “microorganisms, patient tissue, blood, and lubricants on brushes and other cleaning implements could be transmitted from one device to the next during cleaning. In addition, accumulated microorganisms, patient blood, and patient tissue on cleaning implements could pose potential health risks to personnel.”

For more information, we urge you to purchase the entire American National Standard: ANSI/AAMI ST79: 2017 Comprehensive guide to steam sterilization and sterility assurance in health care facilities

ICAP is a cooperative effort of UNMC/Nebraska Medicine and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. “ICAP Practice Briefs” are intended to provide evidence-based guidance on infection prevention issues; check linked references directly for the most current and more detailed information.