

Off site sterilisation Guidelines

Reusable items should be pre cleaned according to the practice procedure at the point of use.

The items should be wrapped and then sent in a container with a lid to the “off site” facility to be sterilised. Packaging items prior to dispatching to the off site facility may assist with identifying your items at the facility.

A separate container must be provided to be used for the return of the sterilised items. These dirty and clean containers should be clearly labelled so they are not mixed up.

You must have written protocols for the precleaning, packaging and transport of items.

The onus is on your practice to provide evidence that the off site facility maintains adequate standards. Their current Accreditation Certificate and copies of documentation demonstrating the annual validation of their sterilisation process should be requested by you and retained in a file. (For example their sterilisation procedures, and validation record)

The “off site” facility may also request a copy of your precleaning, packaging and transport of items protocols.

All items denoted as “Single use” should be discarded after use and never cleaned for reuse.

Items that will not be used in sterile procedures or contact non intact skin or mucous membranes (eg Kidney dishes) must be cleaned according to the precleaning procedure before reuse

Other supplies required for sterile procedures should be purchased as sterile prepackaged products from a medical supply company. Such items would include dressing trays, extra gauze and swabs.

Metal vaginal speculums must be cleaned according to the precleaning procedure and sterilised before reuse. They do not need to be packaged to maintain sterility. Disposable plastic speculums may be an easier option.

Ensure a sterile speculum is used if a procedure is being performed which requires a sterile set up such as those, which penetrate the uterine cavity, or involve non-intact mucous membranes such as insertion of an IUD.

Sufficient supplies of instruments are required to allow for the turnaround time. Extra instruments and some disposable vaginal speculums may need to be purchased.

The batch/cycle number of all instruments used should be referenced in the patient chart or a log book to assist in the event of an instrument recall.

Staff need to be fully conversant with these protocols.

