

## **Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Alert for Health Care Providers in Community Office Settings: Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Multi-use Medical Devices/Equipment**

**Attention:** Physicians, Dentists, Nurse Practitioners, Infection Control Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Midwives, Family Health Teams, PHO, NSM LHIN, Central LHIN

**Date:** November 1, 2016

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**The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) has recently found that some health care providers using autoclaves in community health care offices are not following best practice guidelines and lack appropriate monitoring to ensure proper functioning of autoclaves.**

All clinics should ensure best practices for reprocessing including cleaning, disinfection and sterilization. Autoclaves should be tested using physical, chemical and biological indicators and results should be **documented**.

1. Have a quality assurance process in place including:
  - A Biological Indicator (spore test) must be used to challenge the autoclave daily.
  - A Chemical Indicator (integrator test strips) must be used in each load within each device/pack.
  - Physical Indicators (e.g., mechanical printouts) must be checked and signed for each cycle.
2. Ensure critical medical devices intended for multi-use (i.e. forceps, scalpel) are reprocessed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Sterilization is required for critical medical devices (enter sterile tissue / vascular system).
3. Semi critical devices (that come into contact with blood or the mucous membrane) can either be sterilized or high level disinfected. Follow manufacturer's instructions for contact times and monitoring of disinfectant strengths.
4. Before equipment is reprocessed, it is important to ensure they are first cleaned properly (e.g. remove organic material like mucous, blood, etc.). An item that has not been cleaned cannot be effectively disinfected or sterilized.
5. Ensure that staff involved in sterilizing equipment are trained and IPAC policies and procedures are in place. Staff are encouraged to review the Public Health Ontario online learning module on Reprocessing in the Community.  
[www.publichealthontario.ca/en/LearningAndDevelopment/OnlineLearning/InfectiousDiseases/Reprocessing/Pages/default.aspx#.Vy4bSmNpBmA](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/LearningAndDevelopment/OnlineLearning/InfectiousDiseases/Reprocessing/Pages/default.aspx#.Vy4bSmNpBmA)
6. It is imperative that single-use devices (SUDs) are never reused or reprocessed.

For additional information and resources, including learning modules, see the Public Health Ontario's website: Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice, available at:

[//www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/PIDAC/Pages/Infection-Prevention-and-Control-for-Clinical-Office-Practice.aspx](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/PIDAC/Pages/Infection-Prevention-and-Control-for-Clinical-Office-Practice.aspx)

If you have any questions please contact the Communicable Disease Program at 705-721-7520 or toll free at 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8809.



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