



EVERYONE LOVES A HOT BATH:  
**TEMPERATURE**  
AND ITS EFFECT ON MANUAL CLEANING

ENZYMATIC EXPERT SERIES

 **BEYOND**  
CLEAN



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Clinical Education Manager, Certol Intl.

*Beyond Clean Enzymatic Expert Series:*

## EVERYONE LOVES A HOT BATH: TEMPERATURE AND ITS EFFECT ON MANUAL CLEANING

*Peggy Spitzer, AAS, BA, MA.Ed.*

*Clinical Education Manager, Certol International*

One of my favorite baby shower gifts is the beloved rubber ducky featuring a built-in temperature indicator. Do we have a comparable issue to monitor temperatures for manual cleaning in sterile processing?

Some hospitals receive an unpleasant surprise when a deficiency is cited for failure to meet chemical instructions for use. **While some enzymatic products may need a minimum temperature to activate, most detergents, both enzymatic and non-enzymatic, will specify preferred temperatures on the label.** To help with monitoring consider both thermometers and sink wall stickers. After reviewing label directions, consider posting temperature and dosing on a laminated wall chart, then ensure training and return demonstration. Every technician should be able to state temperature and dosing for the chemicals in use.

Surgical soils also present a challenge for temperature monitoring. If instruments with residual blood are placed into sinks or sonics with solutions near 120 degrees F (50 degrees C) this will denature or “cook” the proteins, as you may see at home when clear egg whites turn white upon cooking. The blood soils stick and adhere more tightly leading to cleaning failures.

This issue may not be common in sinks as technicians will notice higher temperatures during manual cleaning. It is a hidden problem in the ultrasonic cleaning tank as the cleaning solution may gradually overheat with repeated cycles. This is another good reason to monitor water temperatures in the ultrasonic and change ultrasonic cleaning solutions frequently.

Have more enzymatic questions? Contact Peggy at: [pspitzer@certol.com](mailto:pspitzer@certol.com)

*Beyond Clean Enzymatic Expert Biography:*

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Peggy Spitzer is a Colorado native with over 30 years of combined experience as a healthcare provider, college faculty and clinic manager. Currently she is clinical education manager at Certol Intl., a manufacturer of detergents and disinfectants for healthcare. She develops and presents education programs to hospital and dental professional groups focusing on infection prevention, instrument processing and best practices for chemicals. Peggy is a past president, past secretary and current treasurer of the Rocky Mountain Central Sterile Chapter promoting education and certification for Sterile Processing professionals. She is an active speaker for APIC and Sterile Processing professional groups and consultant to the Colorado State Dental Board. A special highlight was speaking at the national IAHCSSMM convention in 2019.

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