

THE ROLE OF DISINFECTANTS FOR POINT OF USE INSTRUMENT CARE



ENZYMATIC EXPERT SERIES

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Peggy Spitzer AAS, BA, MA.Ed.
Clinical Education Manager, Certol Intl.

Beyond Clean Enzymatic Expert Series:

THE ROLE OF DISINFECTANTS FOR POINT OF USE INSTRUMENT CARE

Peggy Spitzer, AAS, BA, MA.Ed.

Clinical Education Manager, Certol International

Hospitals and surgery centers have many choices both chemical and non-chemical to manage the prevention of dried soils on instrumentation after patient care is completed. Most facilities use wet towels or pretreatment detergent sprays for this important step of instrument care. **Are disinfectant chemicals another good choice at point of use for holding and transport?**

The decision to use disinfectant sprays at point of use to treat instrumentation may be driven by outside agencies including state OSHA inspectors or consultants. For example, a surgery center reported a recent state OSHA inspection. The state OSHA agent told the facility they should use a disinfectant spray on contaminated instrumentation during transport for worker safety. The facility selected an EPA registered disinfectant containing 21% alcohols and quaternary ammoniums.

How will alcohols and quaternary ammonium chemical agents affect our goals for pretreatment? First, alcohols will denature and fixate proteins creating a barrier for cleaning. Secondly, ammonium chemicals may be incompatible with instruments and are noted in some instructions for cleaning as a chemical to avoid.

Are disinfectants a required strategy to protect workers when handling contaminated instrumentation? A standard interpretation letter issued by OSHA in a similar situation reinforces the use of solid containers and biohazard markings for safety compliance during transport along with utility gloves and other personal protective equipment.

Chemical agents must be your supporting partner in decontamination. Follow device manufacturer's recommendations for selecting chemicals to use for pretreatment and cleaning.

Have more enzymatic questions? Contact Peggy at: pspitzer@certol.com

Beyond Clean Enzymatic Expert Biography:

PEGGY SPITZER, AAS, BA, MA.ED.

**CLINICAL EDUCATION MANAGER
CERTOL INTERNATIONAL**



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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