



# The Myths & Science of Detergent Performance

ENZYMATIC EXPERT SERIES

 **BEYOND**  
CLEAN



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

*Beyond Clean Enzymatic Expert Series:*

## THE MYTHS AND SCIENCE OF DETERGENT PERFORMANCE

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*Clinical Education Manager, Certol International*

Picture brilliant red and yellow colors at Prismatic Hot Springs in Yellowstone Park in naturally heated water around 160 degrees F and beautiful green algae living in icy mountain streams. Both are produced by enzymes working with bacteria to make biochemical magic at amazing temperature extremes.

How does this benefit sterile processing? With proper sourcing and chemical engineering, higher quality enzymatic detergents are available with expanded temperature ranges. A validated product should spring into action for bedside endoscope cleaning at 65 degrees F and provide verified cleaning at 150 degrees F in an automated washer. This allows sterile processing departments to standardize on high quality enzymatic detergents for multiple applications.

The hidden factor that departments should consider when debating the choice between enzymatic and non-enzymatic detergent for soak and sink applications: blood and dried soils inside endoscope channels, box locks and inner surfaces of Kerrison rongeurs. Non-enzymatic detergent works best with friction and direct scrubbing. By contrast, a detergent with effective enzyme content will help dissolve soils where direct contact and scrubbing is difficult or impossible.

Without regulation for our medical grade detergents, it is difficult for sterile processing departments to proceed with confidence when selecting chemical cleaners. Because advertising claims may not support best practices from professional guidelines, it is critical for departments to select products validated with testing. In addition, create policies for regular documented cleaning verification using commercially available tools such as enzyme monitors and cleaning verification test coupons.

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

*Beyond Clean Enzymatic Expert Biography:*

**PEGGY SPITZER, AAS, BA, MA.ED.**

**CLINICAL EDUCATION MANAGER  
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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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