

# Body and Beauty Art

## Sterilization

### What is the Health Risk?

You and your clients are at risk of being exposed to HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C or other microorganisms, such as bacteria or fungi.

**You do not have to see blood or body fluids on equipment or surfaces for an infection to occur.**

### What is sterilization?

- Sterilization is a process that kills **all** forms of microbial life, including bacterial spores and blood borne virus, such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.

### When is sterilization required?

- Instruments that pierce or penetrate the skin, for example a piercing or tattooing needle, must be sterile and only used once. These instruments are called critical items.
- Instruments that contact sterile instruments, for example forceps, must be sterile prior to use and must be sterilized between clients. These instruments are called critical items.

### What are approved methods of sterilization?

1. Autoclave (steam under pressure)
  - Autoclaves must have a functioning thermometer or pressure gauge, as well as a drying cycle.
  - All autoclaves must meet with Canadian Standards Association specifications for use in health care or allied health facilities.
2. Dry heat sterilizer (heat)
  - Dry heat sterilizers must have a functioning thermometer to verify temperatures.
3. Chemical autoclave (heat and chemical solution under pressure)
  - Chemical autoclaves must have a functioning thermometer or pressure gauge, as well as a drying cycle.

### What are unapproved methods of sterilization?

Glass-bead 'sterilizer'	UV 'sterilizer'
Ultrasonic cleaner	Pressure cookers
Boiling water	Oven
Microwave	



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## How do I use a sterilizer properly?

- Follow the sterilizer manufacturer's instructions.
- Clean\* instruments thoroughly before sterilization.
- Use only packaging materials that are designed specifically for the sterilizer being used.
- Use a temperature sensitive indicator (e.g., colour change tape or packaging) on every package of equipment being sterilized.
- Do not **overload** the sterilizer.
- Allow sterilized packages to dry before removing from the autoclave. Contamination can occur if packages are handled when wet.
- Mark each dry, sterilized package with the date of sterilization using a stick on label or permanent marker. Be cautious not to puncture or compromise the packaging while marking.
- Store sterilized items in their packages, in a clean, moisture resistant container with a lid.

**\*See the General and Operational Requirements fact sheet for detailed cleaning and disinfecting steps.**

## Additional Requirements:

- Contact Peel Public Health prior to purchasing a new sterilizer or before you change your existing sterilization process.
- If your sterilizer fails a biological spore test, immediately call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 and ask to speak with a Public Health Inspector; see **What to do in the Event of a Failed Spore Test** fact sheet.
- There should be written backup plans in the event that the sterilizer malfunctions or you receive a failed biological spore test result from the laboratory.
- Review your written backup plan annually and post it in the sterilization area.
- Chemical sterilants are not permitted for sterilizing critical items; as critical items must be individually packaged and their sterility maintained until use.
- The use of pre-packaged, sterile, single-use, disposable instruments is recommended.
- For all instruments purchased as pre-packaged and sterile, keep a record of the supplier's and/or manufacturer's contact information for tracking purposes.
- Instruments purchased as sterile must be used before the expiration date.
- Instruments that are in damaged sterile packages must be cleaned and re-sterilized.

For information on how to properly monitor your sterilizer, see the **How to properly monitor your sterilizer** fact sheet.

Source: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Personal Services Settings, 2009.

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