Care of ophthalmic surgical instruments

Handling and safety

**Sharps**
Protect the tips of all sharp instruments with silicone or rubber tubing.
Intravenous infusion tubing or tubing from ‘butterfly’ intravenous needles may be used.

**Remember!**
- Never re-sheath a disposable needle
- Always use artery forceps to remove a blade from a Bard Parker handle
- Provide a gallipot on the theatre trolley to collect used needles and blades
- Do not touch the tips of any instrument
- Never throw an instrument down

**Needles**
Discard used needles immediately after use.
Place in a receptacle used only for this purpose.
Do not over-fill.
Preferably use small receptacles and dispose of them daily.
Seal and incinerate the receptacle when almost full.

Maintenance

**Remember!** All of these maintenance tasks must be done before you sterilise the instruments.

**Cleaning**
Ideally, instruments must be cleaned immediately after surgery (within 20 minutes). If this is not possible, place them in a pH neutral enzymatic solution or at the very least cover them with a moistened towel to prevent blood, tissue, and saline from drying and caking on the instruments.
Use a soft toothbrush and warm soapy water to thoroughly clean each instrument individually and in its open position.
Water should be warm, not hot.

**Lubricating hinged instruments after cleaning**
If you are using water-based lubricants, dip instruments and allow the lubricant to drain off (pictured). **Do not leave to soak, and never put cannulae in lubricant.**

If you are using sewing-machine oil, use a 2 ml syringe and a 21-gauge needle to draw up the oil and a 25-gauge needle to apply oil to the joints. Use a piece of gauze to carefully wipe away any surplus oil.

If any hinged instruments are stored, you must lubricate them at least once a week.
Glass shelves in a lockable cupboard provide for secure storage and easy checking. **Never** pile instruments on top of each other. A well-ventilated room is recommended.

**Shelves**

Thoroughly dry instruments before storing or sterilising them. Dry gauze (used cautiously) or a hairdryer may be used.

**Drying**

Inspect instruments for alignment and sharpness under a good light and magnification.

**Inspecting instruments**

Inspect cannulae to ensure they are not obstructed by flushing through with clean, warm water.

**Rolls**

Rolls, made of strong fabric, are inexpensive. Each pocket holds a single instrument. Secure the roll with ribbon or cord, not elastic, as elastic can degrade in heat. Use rolls only for storage and transportation of instruments, not for any other purpose.

**Cases**

Cases may be of metal or plastic and contain a protective silicone mat. Cases can be used for storage, transportation, and during some sterilisation procedures.

**Cases**

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