



System Medical Advisory November 02, 2015

CDC Concerns about High Level Disinfection of Reusable Equipment

There have been increased concerns raised recently by the CDC regarding the use, cleaning, and reuse of semi-critical medical devices that are utilized within mucous membranes and non-intact skin of patients. These mucous membranes are associated with the nose and oro-pharynx. This category includes respiratory therapy adjuncts and laryngoscope blades.

A review of medical devices indicates that the vast majority of such semi-critical items utilized within the Austin/Travis County EMS System are single use and do not require the high level of disinfection that such items require for re-use. The one item identified as not usually considered single use are the magill forceps utilized for airway management procedures. Given the cost of initiating a comprehensive high level disinfection program for such item, **effective immediately, magill forceps will be a single use item and should be properly discarded after each single patient use.**

While the Austin/Travis County EMS System does not need to initiate high level disinfection, efforts should focus on the packaging and storage of such equipment so as to ensure these medical devices are free from all microorganisms prior to their insertion into a patient. Though, small numbers of bacterial spores are permissible. Intact mucous membranes, such as those of the lungs and the gastrointestinal tract, generally are resistant to infection by common bacterial spores but susceptible to other organisms, such as bacteria, mycobacteria, and viruses.

Providers should make every effort to ensure respiratory therapy adjuncts such as oro-pharyngeal airways, oro-nasal airways, I-gel, endotracheal tubes, gum elastic bougie, laryngoscope blades, needle/surgical cricothyrotomy kits and magill forceps are stored in a manner that prevents environmental contamination and hence decreases the potential for bacterial and viral growth and induction into the patient.

Therefore, maintaining each individual item in its original manufacturer's packaging is imperative. All items should be stored as packaged until needed for patient care. If items are purchased in bulk and not individually packaged; zip lock or hermetically sealed packaging should be provided by System Supply prior to field dispersal. Continual efforts must be made by the System to identify these items, assure this practice continues and look for opportunities to include this into all bid specifications for this type of equipment/supply.

Please contact the Office of the Medical Director for any questions or concerns.

Thank you for all you do.

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