

Top Ten Tips

Benchtop Steam Sterilizers

- 1 Where possible, use a sterile service facility rather than processing locally.
- 2 Do not process wrapped, tubular or textile products in a conventional benchtop steam sterilizer - process them only in a suitable vacuum benchtop steam sterilizer.
- 3 All items must be clean and dry before loading into the sterilizer. Do not overload the sterilizer - the load items might not be sterilized.
- 4 Sterilization performance must be checked frequently (daily - this includes the steam penetration test on vacuum benchtop sterilizers - and weekly by the user; quarterly and annually by a competent test person). This is in addition to routine maintenance and cleaning.
- 5 Drain and clean chamber and reservoir at the end of each day and leave dry. Replenish with sterile water for irrigation from an unopened container.
- 6 Have the sterilizer's pressure system checked for safety. Keep records of all checks and repairs to the pressure system. Do not circumvent safety features. These are legal requirements.
- 7 Keep permanent records of every sterilization cycle.
- 8 Keep written records of all testing and maintenance carried out on every sterilizer. The records should be kept in a logbook.
- 9 Technical advice is available from Registered Authorising Engineers (Decontamination), AED(s). Infection control nurses can advise on prevention of cross infection. Consult them if you are not sure how to sterilize a piece of equipment.
- 10 Do not reprocess single-use devices.