



Clinician advice – Sterilisation wraps

Suggested conservation strategies

Purpose of this advice

To inform Hospitals and Health Services of suggested strategies to conserve the use of sterilisation wraps (Sterile Barrier System); to minimise the impact on service delivery resulting from a reduction in the global supply of sterilisation wraps.

Situation

The Therapeutic Goods Administering have been informed that due to a global shortage of raw materials, Owens & Minor Global Products Division (Halyard), a major supplier of sterilisation wraps in Western Australia, have reduced their supply of sterilisation wraps which will continue for several months.

Due to vendor lead time, alternative products and/or suppliers may not be able to meet immediate demands.

Risk assessment

Conservation strategies should be considered in line with appropriate legislation and relevant standards i.e.:

- Australian/ New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4815: 2006 and AS/NZS 4187: 2014.
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare- Preventing and Controlling Healthcare- Associated Infection Standard.
- ISO 11607-1:2018, Packaging for terminally sterilized medical devices — Part 1: Requirements for materials, sterile barrier systems and packaging systems
- ISO/TS 16775, Packaging for terminally sterilized medical devices

The following prioritisation and conservation strategies should be considered as part of a clinical risk assessment.

Suggested strategies

Minimise utilisation

- Do not use or open sterilisation wraps or wrapped sterilised trays for training purposes.
- Consider rationalisation of all trays.
- Where appropriate, adopt a risk-based approach of sterile stock to extend shelf life to decrease reprocessing demand (seek advice from sterilising experts).
- Consider using dust covers to extend the shelf life of some items with infrequent use.
- Limit sets being opened in error to search for a specific instrument.
- Ensure instrument trays are clearly labelled on the outside regarding content.
- Discuss with the treating surgeon/clinician to confirm prior to intervention the individual instrument requirements for a procedure.

We would like to acknowledge that some of content for this notice has been reproduced from the Queensland Health Patient Safety Notice 10/2021



- Restocking of orthopaedic implants on trays should be performed when the tray is next opened rather than opening trays to restock.
- For heavy trays, ensure a transport tray is utilised to help avoid wrap damage and breaks in sterility.
- Communicate to staff (i.e. CSSD, theatre, surgeons/clinicians etc.) the issue and risk of the reduced supply of sterilisation wraps including judicious use of supplies and minimisation of waste.
- Where appropriate, for Loan Sets, sites are encouraged to consider and explore the following strategies;
 - Reduce Loan Set/Tray use – utilise consignment joint sets where possible.
 - Review utilisation of Loan Sets that may currently be on site and not in use and consider transporting to another site. Ensure relocation is undertaken in suitable compliant containers and transportation that maintains sterility.

Utilising alternate methods

- Where possible use Sterile Barrier Systems which do not require single-use wraps.
- Consider utilisation of rigid containers/canisters.
- Consider pouch packaging if not current practice (e.g. oral health, small instrument sets up to 15 kilograms).
- Where possible use single use instruments (e.g. minimally invasive surgery).
- Consider reductions in loaned equipment through use of consignment stock or purchase of additional instrument sets.

Review cases and surgical lists

- Regularly review all cases including dental, specialist outpatients etc. to ensure appropriate utilisation of current Sterile Barrier System stock.
- Avoid case load scheduling that would require the loan of an additional set of instruments.
- Review surgical lists in case further prioritisation is required.

Localised supply chain adjustments

- Perform regular assessments of sterilisation wrap supplies and ensure a local escalation framework is in place.
- Liaise with local private providers to ensure conservation strategies are maximised.

Actions required by Hospital and Health Services

1. Distribute this Clinician Advice to all areas where sterilising wraps are purchased and used.
2. Nominate a central contact person for Health Support Services to contact to centrally coordinate all actions related to the shortage.