

Handling, maintenance and storage of ophthalmic surgical instruments in Kenya. Colour lithograph by the International Centre for Eye Health, ca. 2000.

Publication/Creation

London (Keppel Street, WC1E 7HT) : International Centre for Eye Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, [2000?]

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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

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

Cleaning



Use a soft toothbrush and hot soapy water to clean thoroughly each instrument individually and in its open position.

Lubricating



Use a lubricant immediately after cleaning hinged instruments to prevent stiff joints and to inhibit rusting. Dip the instruments only and then rinse, but do not leave to soak. Down's Surgical Instrument Lube or Dixie's Surgi-Slip are recommended.

Drying



Instruments must be dried thoroughly before storing. Dry gauze (used cautiously) or a hairdryer may be used.



Oiling



Stored hinged instruments need oiling weekly. Use a 2 ml syringe and 21 gauge needle to draw up the oil, and a 25 gauge needle to apply oil to the joints. Surplus oil should be wiped off carefully with gauze. Ordinary sewing machine oil is recommended.



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

Inspection



Check that the lumen is patent (not blocked) by flushing through with clean hot water.

Storage, Transportation and Security

Silicone or rubber protectors must be used on sharp instruments when in storage or transit

Shelves



Glass shelves in a lockable cupboard provide for secure storage and checking.

Never pile instruments on top of each other. A well ventilated room is recommended.

Trays



Each individual slot in the tray holds a single instrument.

Instruments must not touch each other.

The tray can be used for storage, transportation, and during some sterilization procedures.

Cases



Cases may be of metal or plastic and contain a protective silicone mat.

The case can be used for storage, transportation, and during some sterilization procedures.

Rolls



Rolls, made of strong fabric, are inexpensive. Each pocket holds a single instrument.

Secure the roll with ribbon or cord, not elastic. Use rolls only for storage and transportation of instruments.



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This poster highlights the main principles discussed in a full article in Community Eye Health Journal, Vol 13, Issue N° 35, 40-41, 2000.
Supported by Sight Savers International, Christian Blind Mission International, and Dark & Light Blind Care.

Photos: Ingrid and Maxine Cox