



**PRAIRIE NORTH REGIONAL  
HEALTH AUTHORITY**

**POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

**Number:** 15646(P)  
**Category:** Continuing Care  
**Title:** Steam Sterilization of Foot Care Instruments Procedure

**Approved by:** VP Integrated Health Services

*Phorwa Kung*

**Source:** Home Care Managers  
**Date Effective:** Sept. 29, 2014

<b>Review Date:</b>					
<b>Initial:</b>					

**PROCEDURE**

For the purpose of this policy:

**Nurse** will be used when referring to Registered Nurses, RN (Nurse Practitioner), Licensed Practical Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and Graduate Nurses collectively.

**Client** will be used when referring to clients, patients and residents.

**1. Classification of Foot Care Devices**

**Critical:** Means the device presents a high risk of infection if the device is contaminated with any micro-organisms including bacterial spores, because of their potential to cut skin and enter sterile tissues.

- a) A critical medical instrument or device will enter a sterile body cavity, or may come into contact with normally sterile tissues or contact the vascular system.
- b) Foot care instruments are considered critical.
- c) These instruments may breach the skin integrity or come into contact with existing open skin areas which are present as a result of peripheral vascular disease or other conditions.

**2. Categories of Foot Care Devices**

Foot care devices can be divided into 3 categories; single-use, client owned and multi-client reusable.

- a) Single-use Foot Care Devices – Is used once and discarded (i.e. disposable foot files).
- b) Client Owned Foot Care Devices – Are cleaned between uses according to manufacturer’s instructions and stored in a manner to protect from contamination (i.e. drug store bought nail clippers that are not stainless steel and cannot be steam sterilized).
- c) Multi-client Reusable Foot Care Devices – Are cleaned and steam sterilized between uses.

**Single-Use Foot Care Devices**

- It is labelled as single-use by the manufacturer;
- The labelling is unclear whether or not it is single-use medical device; or
- There are no manufacturers reprocessing instructions for it.

**Client-Owned Foot Care Devices**

- Must never be used for another individual.
- Must be cleaned between uses. This includes a cleaning with water or an enzymatic detergent. Follow by cleaning with a High Level Disinfectant wipe.
- Be inspected and replaced if damaged, corroded and no longer functioning.
- Be labelled and stored in a manner that prevents use by other individuals (i.e. in a clean container/zip bag labelled with 2 clients identifiers, such as name and health care number or date of birth).

**Multi-Client Reusable Foot Care Devices**

- Must be cleaned and steam sterilized according to the manufacturer's instructions prior to reuse on another client. Sterility must be maintained until use on the next client.
- Foot care providers must have the right number of sterile foot care devices to provide foot care for every client.
- Multi-client reusable foot care devices should be reprocessed in a centralized medical device reprocessing area.

**3. Reprocessing Requirements**

**3.1. Cleaning**

- a) Whether or not foot care devices appear soiled; clean foot care devices at the point of care prior to transporting to the reprocessing area.
- b) Foot care devices if not cleaned immediately must be kept moist by using a wet towel moistened with water. Saline may not be used.
- c) Foot care devices shall be cleaned with a cloth or gauze moistened with water at a minimum.
- d) Ideally they will be cleaned with a detergent and brush under the surface of the water to prevent aerosols. Adequate PPE is to be worn (i.e. face mask with eye shield, water resistant gloves and water resistant apron).
- e) Dry foot care devices using a soft lint free absorbent towel. Paper towel and air drying is not acceptable.
- f) Discard disposable cleaning accessories if used.
- g) Clean and sterilize reusable cleaning accessories on a regular basis (i.e. weekly/the first week of each month).
- h) Storage areas where foot care devices and associated equipment will be stored (i.e. shelves, carts, cupboards) must be cleaned and disinfected regularly (i.e. Wellness clinic on site storage areas will be cleaned and disinfected annually).

**3.2 Handling and Transport**

- a) Following cleaning of foot care devices, staff shall place soiled devices to be steam sterilized in a Red transport bin. Affix a Medical Devices Tracking Form (PNHR #647 – Appendix A).
- b) Attach a PNRHA Bill of Lading to outside of Red transport bin.
- c) Include an empty clean/sterile clear transport bin with a clear lid that is 2 – 3 times the size of the Red bin (to provide sufficient space for the added packaging once steam sterilized).
- d) Place the Red and clear containers, as well as the affixed Tracking Form and Bill of Lading into a clear plastic bag and seal bag.

- E) Ensure containers are ready for pick-up at the local location in time for transport to one of the Centralized Medical Device Reprocessing Departments (Lloydminster Hospital, Meadow Lake Hospital and Battlefords Union Hospital).

### **3.3 Storage**

- a) Maintain sterility of foot care devices until point of use. Temperature should be between 15° C and 30° C, while relative humidity should be between 30% and 60%. If either temperature or humidity has been outside the acceptable range, the foot care devices will no longer be considered sterile and can't be used without re-sterilizing.
- b) Rotate stock (first in and first out).
- c) Store sterile packages to protect from contamination and preserve package integrity. Damaged, torn, wet or dropped packages are considered contaminated. Reprocess foot care devices if the package integrity is compromised.
- d) Store sterile, packaged foot care devices in a clean area protected from excess humidity, temperature extremes, contamination, or excessive handling and crushing.
- e) Do not store sterile packages beneath the sink or in the soiled holding or cleaning areas.
- f) At the point of use, upon opening the packaged foot care devices, inspect the packaging for integrity, and review the results of the internal and external chemical indicator.
- g) Departments storing sterilized foot care devices must participate as directed by the Medical Reprocessing Unit in the case of a Recall Procedure for a failed Biological Indicator.

### **References**

1. Standards for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Reusable Medical Devices for all Health Care Facilities and Settings (January 16, 2008). Alberta Health and Wellness. <http://www.health.alberta.ca>
2. Best Practices For Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Critical and Semi-critical Medical Devices In BC Health Authorities. (Reviewed and revised December 2011). BC Ministry of Health.
3. Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Best Practices Guidelines for Foot Care Devices (July 17, 2013). Alberta Health Services. IPC Standards and Projects.
4. CHICA-Canada Practice Recommendations. *Cleaning and Disinfection of Non-Critical Multi-Use Equipment/Devices in Community Settings*. Developed By; CHICA-Canada's Community Health Interest Group. December 2012.