

Status **Active** PolicyStat ID **18670684**



Origination 05/2022  
Last Approved 08/2025  
Effective 08/2025  
Last Revised 08/2025  
Next Review 08/2028

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Project Coordinator  
Policy Area Infection Prevention  
Applicability UNC Medical Center

## Cleaning And Disinfection of Non-Critical Items

### I. Description

This policy is to provide UNC Hospitals staff guidance for cleaning and disinfection of non-critical reusable patient care equipment or items and environmental surfaces.

### II. Policy

#### A. Spaulding Classification Scheme

The Spaulding classification scheme is a rational approach to disinfection and sterilization of reusable patient care equipment and/or devices. Based on the degree of risk of infection involved in the use of items, the scheme divides reusable patient care items into three distinct categories: 1) critical; 2) semi-critical; 3) non-critical.

Critical Items: require sterilization	Enter/contact normally sterile tissue or the vascular system. Examples include but are not limited to surgical instruments, certain catheters, implants, laparoscopes, arthroscopes.
Semi-critical Items: require at least high-level disinfection	Contact intact mucous membranes or non-intact skin. Examples include but are not limited to some endoscopes, endocavitary probes, diaphragm fitting rings, laryngeal blades.
Non-critical Items: require low-level disinfection	Contact intact skin but not mucous membranes. Examples include but are not limited to bed pans, blood pressure cuffs, and stethoscopes.

1. For sterilization of critical items, refer to Infection Prevention policy: [Sterilization of](#)

Reusable Patient Care Items.

2. For High Level Disinfection of Semi-Critical items, refer to Infection Prevention policy: High Level Disinfection (HLD) – Manual reprocessing of reusable semi-critical medical devices.

## B. Low Level Disinfection of Environmental Surfaces and Reusable Patient Care Equipment or Items

1. Disinfectants

- a. Staff will use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered disinfectant per manufacturer's instructions for use (MIFU), to clean and disinfect surfaces, reusable patient equipment and devices. Follow the MIFU for the indicated contact/dwell time for each disinfecting product.
- b. In cases of suspected or confirmed illness that requires Enteric Isolation, disinfect devices with a sporicidal germicide such as Sani-Cloth<sup>®</sup> bleach wipes per MIFU.
- c. If equipment or device MIFU do not provide cleaning and disinfection instructions, contact Infection Prevention for assistance.

2. Disinfect reusable non-critical patient care equipment or devices per MIFU.

- a. Follow MIFU for frequency of disinfection of non-critical patient care equipment or patient care items.
- b. If MIFU do not specify a frequency of disinfection, disinfect all patient care equipment when visibly soiled, after use with patients on transmission-based isolation precautions, and on a regular basis (e.g., daily, weekly, etc.).

<b>NOTE:</b> Single use disposable patient care items may not be disinfected for reuse. Refer to Infection Prevention Policy: <u>Reuse of Single Use Devices.</u>
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## C. Responsibilities

1. Department Directors, Managers and/or designees

- Ensuring surfaces, reusable patient care equipment and devices are cleaned and disinfected according to the MIFU.

2. Infection Prevention Department

- Consults on the cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, reusable patient equipment and devices. Conducts rounding to assess compliance.

Escalates concerns as needed and collaborates with unit or clinic leadership to ensure safe patient care.

### III. References

CDC guideline for disinfection and sterilization in health-care facilities; Rutala WA, Weber DJ, and Healthcare Infection Control Advisory Committee (HICPAC). 2008

Cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization. APIC Text: Basic principles of infection prevention practice. Jinadatha, C., & Bridges, A. (n.d.). 2020

### IV. Related Policies

[Infection Prevention Policy: High-Level Disinfection \(HLD\) - Manual Reprocessing of Reusable Semi-Critical Medical Devices](#)

[Infection Prevention Policy: Infection Prevention Guidelines for Safe Patient Care](#)

[Infection Prevention Policy: Reuse of Single Use Devices](#)

[Infection Prevention Policy: Sterilization of Reusable Patient Care Items](#)

### V. Responsible for Content

Infection Prevention

#### Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Policy Stat Administrator	Judith Strubin: Mgr Program-IP	08/2025
AVP Quality UNCMC	Erin Burgess: HCS Exec Dir Quality Improvement Complex AMC	08/2025
Dir Epidemiology	Emily Vavalle: HCS Exec Dir Infection Prevention	08/2025
	Sherie Goldbach: Project Coordinator	08/2025

#### Applicability

UNC Medical Center