

TROUBLE-SHOOTING GUIDE

Problems	Probable causes	Solutions
Corrosion in joints, cavities, serrations or ratchets.	Baked on blood, debris and residue left during sterilization. Lenin wraps containing residue of caustic detergent chemicals.	Carefully clean and rinse affected areas with soft bristle brush. Check with the laundry to make sure lenins are rinsed thoroughly.
Rust Deposit on surface.	Sterilizing instruments of different metals in the same cycle.	Sterilize non-ferrous metal instruments separately from stainless steel.
Rust colored film.	Chemicals in the detergent or excessive amounts of iron or other minerals from the local water supply .	Use distilled or demineralized water. Surface rust can be removed by light buffing or an application of metal polish.
Brownish Stain or deposit of chromium oxide.	Contamination from un-clean sterilizer chamber.	Use distilled or demineralized water to cycle through the autoclave.
Bluish Gray Stains.	Use of cold sterilizing solutions beyond recommended time.	Follow manufacturer's guidelines. use distilled water and rust inhibitor.
Purplish-Black stains.	Presence of ammonia in the cleaning compound or in autoclave system	Use distilled or demineralized water to cycle through the autoclave.
Pitting.	Exposure to blood, saline solutions, potassium chloride and other acids. Detergents with Low pH (acidic less than 6 pH) or High pH (alkaline more than 8 pH)	Use only CE Marked detergents with neutral pH (7). Clean and rinse thoroughly. Use distilled or demineralized water.
Light and dark colored spots or moisture remaining on the instruments within the sterile wrapped packs.	Water droplets condensing on the instruments and evaporating very slowly, usually traced to a high mineral contents in the water supply. Excessive moisture in autoclave during sterilization and termination of cycle.	Ensure instruments are fully dried. Use distilled water only. Make sure that autoclave chamber is clean and check for leak in gaskets or valves to stop condensation. At the end of the autoclave cycle before the drying cycle unlock the door and open it about 6-7mm. Then run the drying cycle for the period recommended by the autoclave manufacturer. If the autoclave door is fully opened before the drying cycle, cold room air will rush into the chamber causing condensation on the instruments that may result in water stains or cause wet packs.

The most effective method of dealing with instrument problems is to prevent them from occurring. It is also important to act quickly before a problem arise. Take corrective actions to prevent further problems. Remove defective instruments from service.