

## Melbourne University CSSD

Recently Matt Wann, Provet Instruments & Equipment Manager, had the pleasure of meeting some of the Staff from the Melbourne University Central Sterilizing Services Department (CSSD).

This department of the University Vet School services the undergraduate and Post Graduate Students preparing theatres and equipment for the students, they also train the students in theatre management and infection control. The CSSD also provides sterilizing services to the Vet Schools Small Animal and Equine Theatres. Eight Staff (Anne Albon,

Candice Saunders, Heather McLean, Many Sawyer, Carolin Reviere, Maxine Wilkinson, Elyse Hampson) are employed and they are headed up by Carol Bradley.

This dedicated team of individuals are responsible for the day to day reprocessing of Surgical Instruments, linen and endoscopes. Their job is to make certain that infection control is at the highest level by meticulously following procedures in the cleaning, inspecting, packing and sterilisation of theatre instruments, equipment and linen. The staff in CSSD also work as theatre nurses and scrub nurses in both the small animal and equine hospital theatres.

Carol receives many calls from Veterinary Hospitals with questions regarding infection control etc. On the next page are some handy hints from Carol that will help with your instrument care and sterility.



*Matt Wann, Provet Instruments & Equipment Manager and Carol Bradley.*

# CAROL'S 6 TIPS IN INSTRUMENT CARE



Carol Bradley QVN, Cert. In Health III (Sterilising Practice for Technicians), Cert IV in A&WPTing, Central Sterile Supply, Small & Large Animal Operating Theatres, University of Melbourne Veterinary Clinic & Hospital.

- 1** You can clean without disinfecting or sterilising but you can't disinfect or sterilise without thorough cleaning.  
Thorough cleaning can reduce up to 99.9% of naturally occurring microbial contamination
- 2** Wire brushes, steel wool and abrasive cleaners should not be used to clean instruments.  
Non-abrasive creams or pastes (Jif or similar) can be used for spot cleaning.
- 3** Routine use of lubricants such as instrument milk isn't recommended. They are a potential source of contamination. If a lubricant must be used, choose a water miscible one.  
Never use an oil or lubricant not designed for the equipment.  
Never use saline to clean or rinse stainless steel instruments, this damages the protective passivation layer and may leave the instrument open to corrosion.
- 4** Soaking instruments in iodine solutions will discolour, pit and damage stainless steel instruments.  
To check the sharpness of surgical scissors, wet a normal tissue; the scissor should cut the tissue cleanly and smoothly without any jagged edges or incomplete cuts.
- 5** Reusing single-use packaging is not an acceptable practice and should be discouraged. Clinical testing has shown that the barrier qualities of polypropylene wrap is reduced once it's been subjected to steam sterilization and handling. It can be reduced even further if subjected to a 2nd or 3rd use, therefore its integrity cannot be relied upon, nor can the practice be defended as the manufacturer has labelled it single use only.  
When handling sterilised items in paper packaging material, microscopic holes can be created, even if handled very carefully. Any breach in the packaging material renders the item non-sterile.  
\*Minimise handling of paper packaged instruments.  
Waxed brown bags must not be used for sterilising as the bags may leech wax onto the instrument. This wax is then introduced into patient, potentially setting up reactive tissue.
- 6** Ballpoint pens used to identify contents of sterilised bags will create microscopic holes in the paper. Non sterile skin marker pens are a great alternative.  
A time frame for sterile storage is event related, not date related therefore routine resterilising of all items in the practice may not be necessary.  
Date the packages and rotate their use, so that no item is left on the shelf for an extended period of time.