Sterilisation

Sterilisation is a validated process used to render a product free from all forms of viable micro-organisms. Practices will ensure that all equipment used in clinical procedures is sterile.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

5.3.3C *The practice team member with delegated responsibility for the sterilization process can describe in detail how sterile procedures are undertaken, including where relevant:*
- provision of an adequate range of sterile reprocessed or disposable equipment
- procedures for having instruments sterilised offsite, including documentary evidence of a validated process
- procedures for on-site sterilisation of equipment, including monitoring the integrity of the whole sterilisation process, validation of the sterilization process and steriliser maintenance
- safe storage and stock rotation or sterile products.

Assessment methods

- Interviews with GPs and practice staff

Practice staff will be able to describe how instruments are sterilised and stored for use when required.

- Document review of validation and calibration of the steriliser
- Document review of practice procedures

If on-site sterilisation takes place, the practice will be asked to demonstrate the correct use of the steriliser and provide a written sterilisation procedure. Staff will also be asked for documentary evidence that the steriliser has been calibrated and validated every 12 months.

If off-site sterilisation takes place, the practice will have a procedure for the safe transport of instruments to and from the practice. Evidence of the provider's accreditation or validation must be available for review by surveyors.

Meeting the standards

The practice will have procedures for the safe storage and rotation of stock to maintain sterility, and the GPs and staff will be able to describe this process. Staff will be able to describe the procedures followed to sterilise instruments at the practice, or describe suitable

arrangements with an off-site provider. Staff will be able demonstrate that appropriate ongoing training has been undertaken in regards to these procedures.

Practices that use off-site sterilisation facilities will have documented procedures for the safe transport of instruments to and from the practice, and will ensure that the off-site facility correctly performs and validates the sterilisation process.

Best practice:

The practice will have a system that enables accurate tracking of sterilised items used on any individual case as part of risk minimisation processes.