

HIGH DESERT HEALTH SYSTEM AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTER

SUBJECT: XIII-109 EVENT-RELATED SHELF LIFE OF STERILIZED ITEMS	POLICY #: 1126
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DATE APPROVED: 11/21/2017	

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for the use of event-related shelf life of sterilized items.

POLICY: All sterile items are considered sterile unless the integrity of the package has been compromised.

PROCEDURE:

1. All items processed in Central Services (CS) for sterilization will be properly wrapped and handled in such a manner as to provide an effective barrier to microorganisms.
2. All in-house sterilized items will have a load control label, with the number of the daily cycle and the date of sterilization, affixed for stock rotation procedures and recall purposes only. The initials of the processing technician will also be on the outside of each package.
3. Each sterile package will be inspected, prior to its opening and use. If the package is torn, wet, has a broken seal, or is damaged, DO NOT USE, The item is to be returned to CS for reprocessing.
4. The loss of sterility is event-related, not time-related; therefore, it is important to insure proper storage of items in a manner that does not aid in the compromise of the packaging of the product. When storing supplies/trays on shelves, in cabinets, or in drawers, supplies are to be rotated (i.e. left to right, top to bottom, old to new) so that older processed items are used first.
5. Some items will remain on storage shelves for varying lengths of time. These items will be placed in plastic dust covers to maintain sterility of the package.
6. All items supplied sterile by the manufacturer, bearing an expiration date, will be considered expired on the noted date. If no date is posted, these items will be considered sterile unless the packaging is compromised.

REFERENCES:

AAMI STANDARDS, 4.8 .3, Shelf Life; AORN Recommended Standards of Practice for Steam Sterilization, Practice XI; Federal Register, Volume 45, No. 205

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