

What Did You Leave Behind?

As a special procedure technician at a very busy specialty hospital, I identified a need to verify the efficacy of the cleaning process of all endoscopes that are processed in our facility. Effective cleaning is the most important step in reprocessing endoscopes as it minimizes the potential for cross contamination. Our facilities perform an average of 30-40 procedures each month, and with the heightened attention of the media and public focus on facilities that have had breaches in proper cleaning techniques, it seemed important that we should implement a quality improvement program to verify the effectiveness of our cleaning process.

An improperly cleaned scope can leave organic matter and other residual soil on and within the scope which could present a barrier to effective disinfection/sterilization. Residual soils may also lead to the formation of biofilms within the scope's channels. Failure to clean effectively puts patients at a greater risk of acquiring a nosocomial infection. In order to minimize the chance for this we sought a method for checking each scope for cleanliness prior to the disinfection/sterilization process.

EndoCheck™ procedure was trialed to detect residual blood residue. Multiple procedures performed with bedside cleaning and decontamination performed were tested for blood residue with EndoCheck™. If a positive result is indicated at that time, the scope is cleaned again according to policy and rechecked until a negative result is achieved. Out of the post procedure checks 100% were validated as clear of potential blood residue.

These outcomes satisfied the goals of keeping patients safe by verification of cross contamination prevention, maintaining clean scopes and actually verifying cleanliness of reusable scopes.

Our facility learned that by taking only an extra minute, slowing down and focusing on patient safety and prevention, we can achieve 100% verification of a clean scope being used each and every time. Our patients are not numbers – we affect patient lives with each and every procedure!

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If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact me at:

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