

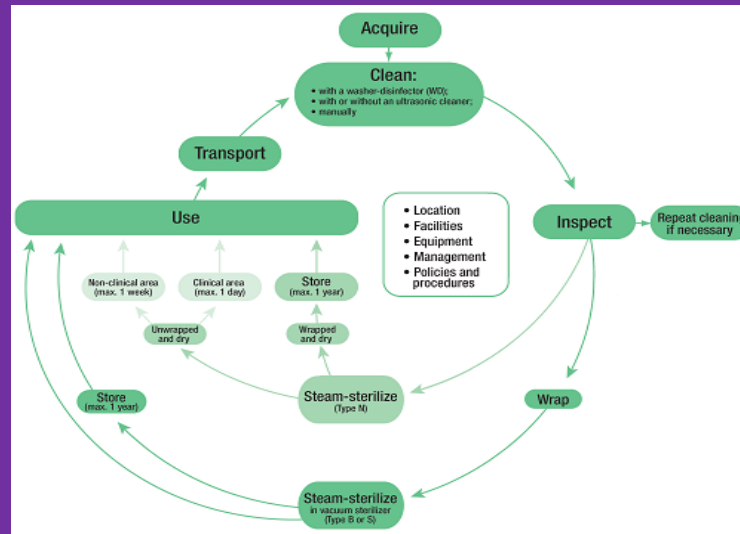
Decontamination of Instruments

In line with guidance (HTM 01 05) all re-useable instruments **MUST** be decontaminated appropriately to render safe for re-use and safe for staff to handle. The separation of instrument reprocessing procedures from other activities, including clinical work, should be maintained by using physical or temporal means.

The shelf life of wrapped instruments is 1 year for both non-vacuum or vacuum cycles. Unwrapped instruments in lidded containers can be stored away in the clinical area for 1 day. Unwrapped instruments in a non-clinical area can be stored in lidded containers for 1 week. NB. *If storing instruments in an 'in use' surgery they need to be stored as far from the dental chair as reasonably practicable.*

Remember: When inspecting reprocessed instruments the use of a magnifying device with task lighting is required.

A documented training protocol should be in operation with individual training records for all staff engaged in decontamination.



Full PPE **MUST** be worn when decontaminating instruments i.e. Heavy duty gloves, mask, safety glasses & disposable aprons. NB. Heavy duty gloves should be changed weekly or sooner if not in good repair (HTM 01 05).

If instruments cannot be cleaned for long periods they should be pre-soaked and kept in a holding solution such as a neutral detergent or an enzymatic detergent. It is advised not to hold in water alone to minimise potential microbial growth.

- A manual cleaning protocol when cleaning instruments manually (HTM 01 05) must be followed.
- When using mechanical means (Ultrasonic bath or Washer disinfecter) they must be serviced & maintained by an external competent agency. This forms part of the validation.
- Autoclaves must also be serviced & maintained. Manual logging, print outs or data loggers must hold a record of the sterilising stage of the cycle. Print outs must be kept for 2 years.