

FAQs for

ProView[®] plus and ProPak[™]

Sterilization Packaging



Why are sterilization pouches used?

Use of sterilization packaging is the proper way to maintain sterility of an item after it has been successfully processed in a sterilizer.

How long does sterility last?

Indefinitely, because sterility is event-related, not time-related. In other words, something has to happen to the packaged item to cause it to become unsterile.

What causes items to become unsterile?

Anything which compromises the package, such as: holes, wetness, broken seals, dropping on floor, dirt or abrasion, etc.

Is it appropriate to reuse self sealing paper/plastic pouches or nylon tubing?

No, steam and heat alter the packaging surface making pin holes more likely during reuse.

My pouches are still hot and wet at the end of the steam sterilization process. Is it OK to take them out of the sterilizer and set them on a towel?

No. Touching a wet pouch will contaminate it and then you will have to repackage it and resterilize it. Microbes can be easily transferred to instruments through wet packaging. Further, during the cooling process, air in the pouch contracts, sucking microbes through the paper. Leave them in the sterilizer until completely cool and dry. Placing them in a pouch rack which holds them on edge during the sterilization process will facilitate both sterilization and drying.

What is the best way to maintain asepsis when opening pouches?

Do not open pouches until immediately prior to use. For surgical procedures, don clean PPE and sterile gloves, use sterile towels to receive items. ProView plus pouches provide a thumb notch and clean peel to aseptically open the pouch without contaminating the contents. Never "punch" instruments through the pouch material.

What is the appropriate way to mark on my pouches the date and load number of sterilization?

A soft graphite pencil may be carefully used prior to loading the pouch on the paper of the pouch. Indelible marker may be used on the poly side of paper/poly pouches. If indicator tape is used pencil or marker can be used on that. Never use magic marker on the paper side of paper/poly or all paper pouches. The ink may bleed through to the instruments thus contaminating them.

What is the appropriate way to tape seal paper bags, nylon tubing or paper/poly tubing?

Fold open end over 1/4" to 1/2" and press to crease. Fold edge over again and secure with sterilization process-specific indicator tape. Wrap tape around the entire package, insuring folded edge and side seams are completely sealed, leaving no gaps.

Are certain types of packaging required for different types of sterilization processes?

Yes, for example ProView plus self sealing paper/plastic pouches are designed for use in steam and chemical vapor sterilization processes. They should not be used in dry heat processes. ProPak nylon tubing is ideal for the higher temperatures of dry heat sterilization.