

Home Birth Supplies Program

Instrument Reprocessing - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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WHAT ARE HOSPITAL INSTRUMENT SETS

1. What are hospital instrument sets?

Hospital instrument sets (also previously referred to as hospital equipment bundles) contain instruments that have been purchased, and are therefore owned, by the health authorities. The health authorities have agreed to loan this instrumentation to care providers attending home births and reprocess it following a home birth. This instrumentation can be safely reprocessed according to provincial policies at the primary hospital sites.

2. How many hospital instrument sets are there?

There are four hospital instrument sets:

- a. Birth set;
- b. Suturing set;
- c. UVC set; and
- d. Episiotomy scissors package*

* Some health authorities included this instrument in the birth set

3. What instrumentation is in each of the sets?

The instruments in the hospital instrument sets may or may not be used during a home birth but are required, as per the BCCNM to be carried by midwives when attending a home birth.

Birthing set	Quantity of instruments per set	Description
Scissors (curved)	1	6 3/4" Mayo scissors (curved)
Hemostatic forceps (curved)	2	8" Rochester-pean forceps (curved)
UVC set		
Tissue forceps	1	5 3/4" Tissue forceps
Scissors	1	5 3/4" Metzenbaum scissors

Mosquito forceps	1	5" Mosquito forceps (straight)
Probe	1	6" P-604_ALMEDIC
Needle holder	1	5 1/2" Halsey needle holder
Suture set		
Dressing forceps	1	5 3/4" Dressing forceps
Tissue forceps	1	5 3/4" Tissue forceps
Sponge forceps (aka - ring) (straight)	1	9 1/2" Sponge forceps (straight)
Scissors (straight)	1	6 3/4" Mayo scissors (straight)
Needle holder	1	7" Crile wood needle holder
Episiotomy scissors package* *Some health authorities have included this item in the birth set		
Episiotomy scissors	1	5 1/2" Braun episiotomy scissors, angled, blunt/blunt

WHAT EQUIPMENT IS STERILIZED

4. What equipment needs sterilization?

If the hospital instrument set is opened, the instruments within will need to be reprocessed, even if not used during a home birth. If a hospital instrument set has not been opened and the sterility and package integrity is still intact, the sterile set does not need to be returned for reprocessing.

5. What if I need equipment that is not in the hospital instrument sets to be sterilized?

If you require other instruments/equipment to be *sterilized*, you will need to make separate arrangements outside of the Home Birth Supplies Program. If other arrangements are being made for the sterilization of other instruments/equipment, the full reprocessing cycle needs to adhere to the BC Ministry of Health provincial policies outlined in the document [Best Practice Guidelines for Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sterilization of Critical and Semi-critical Medical Devices in BC Health Authorities](#).

The *cleaning and disinfecting* of personal equipment or reusable equipment ordered through the Product Distribution Center is the responsibility of the individual care provider. E.g. stethoscope

6. Will the primary hospital sites reprocess other equipment?

If historic arrangements had been made and the primary hospital site agrees, reprocessing services of other office instruments/equipment for care providers may continue. This agreement will remain outside of the Home Birth Supplies Program.

HOW DO I LOOK AFTER THE INSTRUMENTATION IN THE HOSPITAL INSTRUMENT SETS

7. Why do I have to look after instruments in the hospital instrument sets if it is not my own personal instrumentation?

In order to ensure the ongoing availability of the hospital instrument sets and their reprocessing as an integral part of the Home Birth Supplies Program, pre-cleaning, maintenance and care of the instrumentation is essential.

8. Where do I pick up/ drop off the hospital instrument sets?

Each primary hospital site has made arrangements for care providers to pick up sterile and drop off soiled hospital instrument sets. Please contact your manager, midwifery lead or site contact for details.

9. How do I transport the sterile hospital instrument sets?

Sterile hospital instrument sets need to be handled carefully as to maintain sterility and package integrity. Sterile and clean instruments/equipment **MUST NOT** be transported in the same package, bag or container as soiled instruments/equipment. There should be an avoidance of temperature and humidity extremes as well as large fluctuations. (ie. Do not store sterile hospital instrument sets in vehicles)

Some health authorities have provided transport containers for the transport of the hospital instrument sets. If your health authority has not provided a transport container, the container provided by you should be durable, made of easily cleanable surfaces, waterproof and have a tight-fitting lid with the ability to be securely fastened/closed.

Please note: Health authorities may also have local policies or clinical practices with additional requirements that must be followed.

10. I have used some (or all) of the instruments in one (or more) of the hospital instrument sets. What should I do now?

Used instruments **MUST** be pre-cleaned prior to returning to the primary hospital site for reprocessing. Immediately after use, instruments must be cleaned of blood, fluids and tissue by rinsing with water. Do not use saline for this purpose. This instrumentation is then put into a transport container that does not contain sterile or clean instruments/equipment and returned in a timely fashion to the primary hospital site for reprocessing. The container containing the soiled instrumentation should be labeled with a biohazard sticker which can be ordered through the Product Distribution Center. The transport container should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use. A clean instrument set can be collected from the MDR in exchange for the set handed in.

Please note: Health authorities may also have local policies or clinical practices with additional requirements that must be followed.

11. I opened a hospital instrument set, but did not use all the instruments inside. Do I have to return those instruments I did not use?

Once a hospital instrument set has been opened, all instruments in the set need to be returned to the primary hospital site for reprocessing, regardless if the instrument was used or not.

WHAT ELSE WILL BE HANDLED BY THE REPROCESSING DEPARTMENT AT MY PRIMARY HOSPITAL SITE

12. Can I return sharps (eg. needles, scalpels) to the Reprocessing Department?

No. All sharps should be discarded in a standard sharps container which can be ordered through the Product Distribution Center. Full sharps containers should be disposed of in your usual manner.

13. Can placentas be disposed of by the Reprocessing Department?

No. If a placenta needs to be transported to the primary hospital site for pathological studies, it should be transported **directly** to the lab (ensure pre-arrangements have been made). The placenta **should not be** transported in the same transport container as the soiled instruments from the hospital instrument sets. It should be transported in its own separate transport container and labeled with a biohazard sticker. Both the container and the biohazard stickers can be ordered through the Product Distribution Center.

GENERAL QUESTION

14. I have my own personal instrumentation which is similar or the same as that in the hospital instrument sets. Can I continue to use my own instrumentation instead of the instrumentation in hospital instrument sets?

Usage and subsequent reprocessing of the hospital instrument sets provided by the primary hospital sites is strongly encouraged. The instrumentation and sterilization services are being made available to care providers attending home births at no cost.

Only in rare and exceptional circumstances should a care provider not use the hospital instrument sets and the subsequent reprocessing services. If you do not wish to use the hospital instrument sets, please talk to your primary hospital site contact. You may be asked to sign a waiver.

Please note: If using your own personal instrumentation and it requires sterilization following a home birth, primary hospital sites may choose not to sterilize personal instrumentation. If the sterilization is privately arranged, it must adhere to the BC Ministry of Health provincial policies outlined in the document [Best Practice Guidelines for Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sterilization of Critical and Semi-critical Medical Devices in BC Health Authorities](#).