



Title	Infection Control Manual Section 8.1 – Decontamination Overview
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8.1 DECONTAMINATION OVERVIEW

Decontamination: the combination of processes, including cleaning, disinfection and/ or sterilisation, used to render a re-usable item safe for further use

Aim: To ensure that staff understand the difference between the requirements for single use, single patient use and reusable medical devices

To ensure staff understand decontamination guidelines for medical devices

To ensure staff are aware of the safe and appropriate use of disinfectants in order to reduce the risk of spread of infection within the health care environment

STANDARDS

Levels of Decontamination: Standards

Scrupulous cleaning with warm water and detergent removes large numbers of micro-organisms and the organic material on which they thrive. Detergent is necessary for effective cleaning. It breaks up grease and dirt and improves the ability of water to remove soiling. Thorough drying is essential as wet surfaces and equipment are more likely to encourage the growth of micro-organisms and allow the spread of potential pathogens. Cleaning is important in its own right as a method of decontaminating low risk items and is essential before disinfection or sterilisation processes.

Blood and other body fluids must be completely removed from instruments before disinfection or sterilisation. Organic material is coagulated by heat or chemicals and is subsequently difficult to remove after sterilisation and can hinder the decontamination process.

Single use – use once and then dispose of. This item must not be reused.



On manufacturers packaging if single use item.

Single patient use – the item may be reused on a named patient basis and discarded after the named person no longer requires the item.

Reusable medical devices – these may re-used if they are decontaminated correctly. See table 8.1.1

Table 8.1.1

LEVELS OF DECONTAMINATION	APPLICATION
<p>Cleaning: a process that physically removes contamination (blood, faeces, etc) and many micro-organisms.</p>	<p>Suitable for low risk items which touch only intact skin or which make no contact with the patient's skin, e.g. BP cuffs, crutches, furniture etc. Low risk items should be kept clean and dry.</p>
<p>Disinfection: A process that destroys or prevents the growth of micro-organisms to a level at which they are not harmful. Spores may not always be destroyed.</p>	<p>Suitable for cleaning near patient equipment, that has been potentially contaminated by transmissible pathogens including C.diff or norovirus; particularly important during an outbreak situation.</p> <p>Also suitable for the terminal cleaning of rooms vacated by patients presenting an infection risk. [see NATIONAL MANUAL, CHAPTER 2: TRANSMISSION BASED PRECAUTIONS]</p>
<p>High-Level Disinfection: a process that completely eliminates all microorganisms in or on an instrument, except for small numbers of bacterial spores.</p>	<p>Suitable for medium risk items, which have direct or indirect contact with a patient's mucous membranes or non intact skin, e.g. endoscopes, anaesthetic equipment.</p>
<p>Sterilisation: a process that removes or destroys all micro-organisms including spores.</p>	<p>Suitable for high risk items which directly or indirectly come into contact with sterile tissue/fluids e.g. surgical instruments. High risk items <u>must</u> be sterilised.</p>

Management of Equipment

- Before any trial or loan equipment is used by NHS Borders staff, approval/ advice must be sought from the infection Prevention & Control Team [IP&CT], Procurement, Estates Medical Electronics and relevant manager.
- Before any equipment is purchased by NHS Borders staff, approval/ advice must be sought from the infection Prevention & Control Team [IP&CT], Procurement, Estates Medical Electronics and relevant manager.

- it is important that the equipment meets all decontamination and Infection Control requirements

Contamination Status Certificate

All items of equipment, including those which are collected by the Equipment Stores personnel and items being maintained or repaired by the Board Estates Department, which have been in contact with a patient's tissue / body fluids, must have a [Contamination Status Certificate](#) completed before inspection, servicing or repair.