



# Skin Penetration

It is essential that all hairdressers and skin penetration operators know and understand the health implications of the procedures they carry out and the precautions they must take to minimise the risk to health. Organisms that can cause potentially serious infections such as Staphylococcal infections, HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C may be transmitted where appropriate precautions are not taken.

## Cleaning & Sterilisation

All surfaces throughout the premises and items that come into contact with skin require cleaning.

**Cleaning** removes foreign matter and reduces the number of micro-organisms but may not necessarily kill all of them. Common cleaners used include sodium hypochlorite, 70% ethyl or 70% isopropyl alcohol, chlorhexidine, and povidone-iodine. It is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions when using such products. The following demonstrates the correct cleaning process:

1. **Rinse** all equipment in warm water (15–30°C) to remove foreign matter.
2. **Wash** the equipment in a sink filled with warm water and a mild alkaline detergent. The use of a clean scourer pad or brush is encouraged.
3. **Rinse** all equipment thoroughly in hot running water.
4. **Dry** with a lint free cloth or air dry.
5. **Store** in a clean, dry, dust free environment.

**Sterilisation** uses steam under pressure to render equipment free of all forms of micro-organisms including bacterial spores. A steam steriliser (autoclave) is required for this purpose and must be used on all reusable skin penetrating equipment contaminated with blood and body fluids. It is essential that implements are cleaned as soon as possible after use, then sterilised before using on another person. A log book must be maintained for all items that are sterilised, documenting the time and date; the length of time held at maximum pressure and temperature; and maximum pressure and temperature achieved. Once sterilised, equipment must remain stored in the sterilised packaging to prevent contamination and opened in front of the client.

Ultraviolet (UV) cabinets do not sterilise equipment.

## Personal Hygiene

Hand washing is essential for preventing the spread of infections from either the client or the operator. Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and warm running water for at least 1 minute when commencing an aseptic procedure and then dried with a single use towel. Hands should be washed:

- before and after contact with each client;
- where there are multiple procedures performed on a client;
- before resuming a procedure if interrupted;
- immediately prior to putting on and removing disposable gloves;
- after touching the nose, mouth or handling a nasal tissue or handkerchief.



To ensure personal hygiene is kept at a satisfactory level the following procedures are recommended:

- Cover cuts and abrasions with a water resistant dressing and regularly change it when necessary;
- Wear disposable gloves to prevent contact with blood, mucous membranes, open wounds or broken skin;

