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Customer Information Notice: CIN063

Ultrasound probe storage following high level disinfection in trophon® EPR and trophon®2 devices

Proper storage of ultrasound probes after high level disinfection is important to ensure that the probe does not become contaminated. If a probe becomes contaminated during storage, the next patient may be exposed to the contaminating microorganisms and may be at risk of infection. If in doubt as to whether a probe has been stored properly, the precautionary step of re-disinfecting the probe before use should be taken.

The primary factors impacting the likelihood of contamination during storage are as follows:

Factor	Description
Storage duration	The longer a probe is stored, the more likely it is to be exposed to non-optimal storage conditions. *Probes should be stored under optimal storage conditions, described below.*
Handling	Handling of probes increases the likelihood of contamination. *Handling should be minimized, and always occur using clean gloved hands.*
Contact with contaminated surfaces	Contact with unclean surfaces can introduce pathogens to the probe. *Probes should be stored in a designated clean location, and not come into contact with contaminated surfaces during handling or storage.*
Moisture, humidity & warmth	Microorganisms are more likely to grow in the presence of moisture and warmth. It is essential that the probe is dry during storage. *Probes should be stored in a cool, dry location.*
Exposure to air flow/work areas	Probes stored in the path of air flow or in work areas are more likely to become contaminated. *Probes should be stored away from work areas and air flow.*

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Please contact your local Nanosonics representative should you require any additional information regarding this Customer Information Notice.

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An excellent approach to safe storage that mitigates the risk factors above is to use a Clean Ultrasound Probe Cover. These single-use covers protect the probe by providing a barrier to contamination from handling and the environment. Moreover, these covers give patients and staff confidence that the probe is clean and disinfected as the probe cover is removed in preparation for the procedure. Use of these covers enables probes to be stored in work areas, in cabinets or at the patient point of care for efficiency of workflows. Each facility should consider the unique circumstances of their particular setting and the risk factors for contamination described above. From this, optimized probe handling and storage procedures may be implemented. These procedures should be formalized and staff should be trained on how to carry out these procedures.

Studies in endoscopy suggest that 7 days represents an appropriate safe storage limit, after which disinfection should be repeated.[1] However, endoscopes could be argued to be at greater risk of recontamination due to the chance of residual moisture and biofilm inside lumens. With this in mind, and until more quantitative data is available, factors unique to each institution, alongside evaluation of the risk factors outlined above, should be considered when implementing an ultrasound probe storage procedure.

References

Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (SGNA). Standards of Infection Control in Reprocessing Flexible Gastrointestinal Endoscopes. 2018.

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