

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SURGICAL ASEPSIS

- Only a sterile object can touch another sterile object. Unsterile touching sterile is contamination.
- Open sterile packages so that the first edge of the wrapper is directed away from the worker to avoid the possibility of a sterile surface touching unsterile clothing. The outside of the sterile package is considered contaminated.
- Avoid spilling any solution on a cloth or paper used as a field for a sterile set up. The moisture penetrates through the sterile cloth or paper and carries organisms by capillary action to contaminate the field. A wet field is contaminated if the surface immediately below it is not sterile.
- Hold sterile objects above the level of the waist. This will help ensure keeping the object within sight and prevent accidental contamination.
- Avoid talking, coughing, sneezing or reaching over a sterile field or object. This will help to prevent contamination by droplets from the nose and the mouth or by particles dropping from the worker's arm.
- Never walk away from or turn your back on a sterile field. This will prevent possible contamination while the field is out of the worker's view.
- All items brought into contact with broken skin, or used to penetrate the skin or in order to inject substances into the body, or to enter normally sterile body cavities, should be sterile. These items include dressings used to cover wounds and incisions, needles for injection, and tubes used to drain urine from the bladder.
- Use dry, sterile forceps when necessary. Forceps soaked in disinfectant are not considered sterile.
- Consider the outer 1 inch of a sterile field to be contaminated.
- Consider an object contaminated if you have any doubt as to its sterility.