

## **Ten Good-Practice Points for the Use of Benchtop Steam Sterilizers**

- Use a Sterile Service Department (SSD) where possible.
- Do not process wrapped, tubular or textile products in a conventional benchtop steam sterilizer - process them only in a suitable vacuum benchtop steam sterilizer.
- All items must be clean and dry before loading into the sterilizer. Do not overload the sterilizer - the load items might not be sterilized.
- Sterilization performance must be checked frequently (daily and weekly by the user; quarterly and annually by a competent test person). This is in addition to routine maintenance and cleaning.
- Drain and clean chamber and reservoir at the end of each day and leave dry. Replenish with sterile water for irrigation from an unopened container.
- Have the sterilizer's pressure system checked for safety. Keep records of all checks and repairs to the pressure system. Do not circumvent safety features. These are legal requirements.
- Keep permanent records of every sterilization cycle.
- Keep written records of all testing and maintenance carried out on every sterilizer. The records should be kept in a logbook.
- Technical advice is available from the sterilizer manufacturer and Registered Authorised Persons. Infection Control Nurses can advise on prevention of cross infection. Consult them if you are not sure how to sterilize a piece of equipment.
- Never re-process single use devices.