



## Spa cleanliness – multiple steps

**A white paper by Michele Kohl**

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### **Introduction:**

A collaborative effort between a renowned mid-west academic clinic / hospital campus and Spa & Club Ideations, LLC launched the first multi-services spa within this unprecedented setting, on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Through this partnership while developing the spa, new discoveries for the spa industry were applied.

Surmounting industry first challenges to meet rigorous requirements in sterilization, infection control, product selection, service standards, and staffing, with consideration of standards established by \*The Joint Commission overseeing US hospital accreditation was accomplished.

With the rising concern of community acquired methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) taking necessary steps to a healthier spa environment for guests and staff was compelling.

This document discusses spa cleaning procedures with manufacturers' recommendations and proposed improved steps that can take spas to a higher level of sanitation. Cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of esthetic, massage and nail tools, equipment, massage tables and all additional implements used in spa industry treatments and services can be improved by executing multiple procedure steps. These include, cleaning with soap and water, using a cue-tip to remove any debris on tools, the use of EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectants (where applicable) and the use of autoclaves on all metal tools. Additionally the utilization of one-time use implements and one-time use guest amenities can also assist in achieving this objective. This goal can be met in many cases with comparable costs to the facility.

### **Journey to new discoveries**

During the planning of this spa, being that it resided within \***accredited space**, Spa & Club Ideations, LLC needed to facilitate and partner with the Medical Director and many other hospital personnel. The departments of Central Sterilization, Infection Control, Environmental Service, along with Complementary and Integrative Medicine (CIM), Dermatology and Plastic Surgery from the Medical Practice all assisted in various processes to either approve the product lines, equipment and implements for the spa, or to advise on and support the cleaning procedures being adopted. This due diligence was accomplished at a very high level and priority prior to opening.

At these hospitals, all equipment, tools, implements and surgical instruments used for patient care must be sent to the Central Sterilization department after each procedure or surgery, where they go through multiple steps to clean, sanitize, sterilize, dry, sort, package and seal before returning to patient care areas.

These precision protocols are quite detailed and thorough. I had the opportunity to observe these multi-step processes first hand at one of the hospitals. These processes display the critical systems in place for the care and safety of each patient. After each medical procedure or surgery all instruments are removed from the room and either discarded, as with one-time use implements, or gathered in bins, covered and sent to the central sterilization department. The carts that transport dirty instruments or tools are sent through giant washers to be sanitized as well. Additionally, for continual infection control treatment tables and miscellaneous items within the rooms are sanitized with EPA hospital-grade disinfectants before the next patient is brought in. There is a very specific system of protocols for dirty and clean.

Since the interest was high as to how this spa would operate its cleanliness procedures, I prepared 2 presentations and invited select physicians, administrators, and key department personnel from Complementary and Integrated Medicine, Central Sterilization, Infection Control, Environmental Service and other staff personnel.

The presentations featured and demonstrated all of the services that would be offered on the spa menu. All equipment such as; massage tables, table warmers, hot towel cabbies, hot stone heaters, steamers, microdermabrasion machines, lotion warmers, wax pots, pedicure tubs,

manicure tables, metal tools and all implements, such as bowls, cups, etc.(both plastic and rubber), and machines with germicidal UV lamps were displayed for viewing.

The first presentation day was for massage therapy, body treatments and facial procedures, the 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation day was for nails, manicure and pedicure treatments.

One by one, with all spa equipment, tools and implements displayed, I described what the purpose was for each piece of equipment or tool represented in each of the services and through my research of each piece of equipment, what the manufacturer's cleaning recommendations were, what is current common practice in the spa industry and then what we proposed to improve for a superior cleaning protocol. During these presentations, many ideas from the attendees were shared. This knowledge and expertise helped to improve our procedures even further. Some concerns were about tubes that transported skin cells from the guest through the tubing such as; the microdermabrasion machine. These would need to be replaced or thoroughly cleaned between each guest. Further research revealed that replacing the tubing between each guest was not an option, so a cleaning procedure was adopted. Another concern was with the inability to completely sanitize any brushes, sponges or wood spoons. The decision was made to implement one-time use brushes for facials and eliminate the use of sponges and wood spoons.

The presentations and the final procedures that resulted from this collaboration involved a meticulous process for all to undergo. However, the results of this cooperation and shared expertise created the cleaning protocols that this spa's team follows today in the treatment rooms and the dispensary.

The spa did open under unaccredited space; which is how spas normally operate and will be regulated and inspected by the State Cosmetology Board. However the higher levels of sanitation and cleaning procedures were set in motion and remain in place. Accredited space was implemented later for Acupuncture and Dermatology Services. This space will have additional regulation and inspection by The Joint Commission.

\*The Joint Commission - An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission accredits and certifies more than 20,500 health care organizations and programs in the United States. Joint Commission accreditation and certification is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to meeting certain performance standards

\*Accredited Space – Space for healthcare organizations and programs in the United States that provide a “standard” evaluated, issued and regulated by The Joint Commission, for the safety and high quality of care, treatment and service to the public. Accreditation is recognized by insurers and other third parties. Accreditation provides a benchmark within the healthcare industry that affirms the delivery of high quality patient care.

## **Sanitizing, Disinfecting and using Autoclaves**

There are current acceptable procedures and practices by spas concerning the cleanliness, of the equipment and tools used in providing spa services. Through my research of the manufacturer's recommendations and completing a multiple step cleaning process, including the use of warm soapy water, EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectants, and autoclaves achieved our goal of raising the standard of cleanliness. Complying with and surpassing State Cosmetology rules and regulations for sanitation and cleanliness, for both the guests and the staff was attained.

Specific cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting instructions are shown on the chart enclosed in this document. It is recommended that the staff wear gloves and protective eyewear when cleaning and disinfecting. All metal (no plastic or rubber attached to the metal) esthetic and nail tools should be washed with warm soapy water, use a cotton swab to clean all visible residue, rinse, disinfect with EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, rinse, and then place into an autoclave. Following instructions on the autoclave run for the proper amount of time remove when cooled and air dry, then package and seal select tools together, for the next guest's treatment use.

Rubber and plastic bowls and misc. implements that are used in the preparation of a treatment can be washed with warm soapy water and air dried. If the implements are non-porous; such as stones used in hot stone massage therapy, wash with warm soapy water, then an EPA registered hospital-grade wipe can be used, allow proper contact time, rinse and air dry.

Consider an extra step taken on specific equipment with tubes, as suggested by the hospital staff. Disconnect tubing from machines such as microdermabrasion equipment after each service on a guest and wash the tubing in warm soapy water, rinse, syringe alcohol (70%) through tubing, hang and allow to air dry. Several fresh clean tubes need to be available in each treatment room for change over if this service is booked back to back.

Consider another extra step that this spa took for a speedier sanitizing and turnover time for the pedicure tubs. Install pipe-less pedicure tubs (tubs that do not circulate water through the pipes) with jets that can be taken out and taken apart to be cleaned and sanitized with EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant. Additional clean sets of jets can be stored, removing used jets for sanitizing and installing clean jets for each new guest. The EPA hospital-grade disinfectants with their short contact time (listed on containers) can also be used on the tubs for quick sanitizing in between each guest.

**Let your guests know of the extra steps you take that differentiates your spa from others and advertise this information in your marketing materials.**

**Set proper standards and procedures and establish protocols for cleaning of all equipment, massage and facial tables, tools and implements. Schedule initial and on-going training of all staff members and ensure that the standards and protocols are followed consistently.**

**Post these cleaning standards steps in all treatment rooms, prep rooms and dispensaries.**

**Document cleaning dates and times for steamers used in esthetic rooms and post in the treatment rooms for staff to sign when completed.**

**OPTION: One-time use implements: Take home item for guest**

Consider one-time use implements such as; mask and fan brushes, sponges for facials. Hospital personnel do not believe that brushes and sponges can be completely sanitized.

Suggestions for esthetic services:

- One-time use brushes when used can be offered to the guest at the end of the service or discarded. Utilize the technicians' application of some products with their fingertips and the use of small plastic spatulas for applying masks whenever possible.
- One-time use sponges, if used can be offered to guest to take with them, discarded, not use sponges - use 4 x 4 or 2 x 2 gauze instead

Suggestions for nail services:

- One-time use disposable buffers, nail files and orangewood sticks used on guests are discarded or offered to the guest at the end of their service.

**OPTION: One-time use guest amenities: Take home item for guest**

- Rubber slippers for guests to use in the locker rooms and throughout the spa - great item for the guest to keep and take home with them

Several companies carry these at a very attractive price point and this eliminates time and labor to sanitize, match right and left in like sizes, then return slippers to spa locker rooms for re-use.

- Pre-packaged guest amenities in locker room areas - this eliminates guests reaching into open containers with possibly uncleaned hands for items such as: cotton swabs, cotton balls, etc.

### **Data from 2 EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectants compared to UV lamp**

Cosmetology State Boards for each state have regulations governing the safety and care required in salons/spas. It is each individual's responsibility to read, understand and comply with their state's rules and regulations, and keep up with any updates to those regulations.

Have a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) on file for every product used at the salon/spa that could potentially cause injury or harm. An MSDS provide information regarding reactions, spills, ingredients and disposal. Ensure that your employees read and understand this information.

These disinfectants can be effective as a Virucide, Bactericide, Fungicide and may include Tuberculocide. Some can kill MRSA, and Norovirus, HBV, HCV, HIV-1(AIDS virus) and meet blood borne pathogen standards for decontaminating blood and body fluids.

**Generally, disinfectant contact times can vary from 1 to 10 minutes.**

EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant cleaners can come as a pre-mixed ready-to-use concentrate, disinfectant wipes or concentrate that needs to be diluted appropriately into another container for ready-to-use application. Always label these new containers immediately for safety of all staff and guests. Always wear gloves and protective eyewear when mixing or working with these chemicals.

#### **Applications**

Use on washable, hard, non-porous environmental non-food contact surfaces

**NOTE:** Refer to product Material Safety Data Sheet for specific physical properties, health hazard, first aid and precautionary information.

#### **Germicidal UV Lamp**

A **germicidal lamp** is a special type of lamp which produces ultraviolet light (UVC).

Most germicidal lamps used in equipment for spas and salons are Low-Pressure Mercury-Arc lamps that emit radiation peaking at 253.7nm (UV-C). This output at 253.7nm is highly effective to inactive microorganisms such as algae, bacteria, virus, yeast and mold.

These types of machines were determined by hospital staff to not sufficiently sanitize tools and miscellaneous implements alone. Follow tool cleaning procedures before placing in machine with UV lamp.

#### **IMPORTANT:**

**Always wear protective gloves and eyewear when cleaning, disinfecting and using autoclaves.**

Massage	Manufacturer's Recommendation where applicable	Proposed Improved Steps
Massage Tables - Used also in Esthetics	CLEAN your upholstered items when needed using a mild solution of 4:1 diluted non-alcohol cleaner such as Formula 409®, Fantastik®, or Green Windex® DISINFECT your fabric with Protex, MadaCide, MadaWipe, Accell TB, Virox® (Canada), or a diluted 1/10 bleach solution. Dry immediately after cleaning to remove excess cleaning solution.	After each guest - apply appropriate EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant to a dry task bar towel. Thoroughly wipe top and sides of face rest - allow to air dry. Weekly - Apply appropriate EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant to a dry task bar towel. Thoroughly wipe top, sides, creases, arm rests of the table - allow to air dry.
Hot Stone Heaters	End of day - Clean water reservoir & cover with warm soapy water, rinse & dry with towel - Then spray with alcohol and wipe dry. Wipe main heating unit with damp cloth - NEVER immerse main heating unit	End of day - Wipe reservoir dry and use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe. NEVER immerse main heating unit. For non-wood spatula (plastic or rubber) - use alcohol wipes or wash with warm soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher
Stones	Place stones in hot water and anti-bacterial soap, then place on towel to dry.	Wash stones with warm soapy water, then use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe, and air dry
Hot towel cabinet with UV lamp - Used also in Esthetics and Nails	Interior - Wipe up any water drop & moisture on inner box & basket with dry cloth. (Avoid UV lamp) Remove tray and empty. Clean exterior using dry or damp cloth with mild detergent. <b>Do not use</b> solvents, benzene, abrasives or extremely hot water.	End of Day - Interior, exterior and emptied tray - Use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry. Avoid UV lamp and plug inserts
Aromatherapy Diffusers throughout spa - type used at this spa	Wipe interior, drawer and exterior surfaces with damp cloth	Use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry.
Lotion / Oil Warmer - Used also in Esthetics and Nails	Water & damp cloth	Bottles - wash with warm soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher - Heating unit exterior - Use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry.
Full Body Heat Blanket - for body treatments	Unplug first - Wipe clean with warm soapy water or pressure hose	Unplug - Wash with warm water & soap, air dry, then use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant and air dry
Spa Table Warmers - Used also in Esthetics	Information states easy to clean - but no specific recommendations - Durable Vinyl	Unplug - Use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant and air dry
Heated Mittens/Booties - Used also in Esthetics and Nails	No specifications listed	Unplug - Use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant and air dry

Esthetics	Manufacturer's Recommendation where applicable	Proposed Improved Steps
Base w/Steamer	If build up is detected on the heating element, clean steamer. Fill water tank, add 2 tbsp. of white vinegar - switch steamer "On" & let it function for 30 seconds. Then switch to "Off" and let it cool for 15 min. Then drain steamer and refill with distilled water without vinegar, switch to "On" & let steam for 10 min. - Repeat 2-3 more times - "Turn Off", drain unit and refill with distilled water to proper level	<b>Use only distilled water in Steamer</b> - Same procedure for steamer water holder - Base and arm of the unit - Use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant and air dry. - additionally clean the black nozzle with vinegar and cotton swab. Develop protocol, schedule, and checklist for staff to use and sign when completed
Illuminated Magnifier	Open lamp head as described in manual - Blow & dry off any dust and dirt. Avoid use of alcohol, acids or any kind of organic solvents (Isopropanol etc.) Only use the weak mix of ordinary soap & water without any perfumes.	Unplug - Same procedure on lamp head as manufacturer's recommendation. Arm of unit only - Use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry
High Frequency Rod	Disconnect the main plug - danger of shock - Never clean the HF rod in water, chemicals or in an ultrasonic bath. After use - Wipe the housing of the device and the HF rod with a disinfection agent. Ensure that no liquid enters the inside of the housing. Recommend - Dismozon pur (art. no. 9220.710) as disinfecting agent. Do not use aggressive or abrasive cleaning agent or immerse in water.	Unplug - danger of shock - Never clean the HF rod in water, chemicals or in an ultrasonic bath. After use - Wipe the housing of the device and the HF rod with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry. Ensure that no liquid enters the inside of the housing
High Frequency Glass Electrodes	Disinfect the glass electrodes before using with alcohol - wait 5 min before applying to skin. Also disinfect the skin before applying. After use - Clean, disinfect & allow to dry. Never place a glass electrode in water or clean it in an ultrasonic bath. Remove any remnants of active substance. Disinfect electrode with a disinfection cloth. Recommend Bacillol Tissues (art. no. 9220.502)	Disinfect the glass electrodes before using with alcohol - wait 5 min before applying to skin. Also disinfect the skin before applying. After use - Allow to cool and remove any remnants of active substance and use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry
Wax Tank	Heat wax until flowing freely. Empty container. Use a spatula or putty knife to empty any remaining wax. Wax suppliers can suggest a cleaning product to dissolve wax residue. Never use any acetone-based products to clean unit. Alternative is to heat wax in its original container - Its the cleanest way.	Cans of wax will be put into the reservoirs and dispensed until gone with one-time use disposable spatulas. For Wax Tank exterior - Unplug and use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry
Utensil Sanitizer with UV Light	Un-plug & wipe clean with soapy water - Glass cleaner will produce permanent scratches on acrylic surface.	Unplug and wipe interior and exterior with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry.
Microdermabrasion Machine	Console may be cleaned with damp cloth and mild liquid detergent	Unplug and clean console with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe and air dry
Tubing for Microdermabrasion	Disconnect tube from filter. Wash tubing with warm water & detergent - shake to remove as much water as possible. Small drops of water left in the tubing will not harm the console. - After 50 treatments replace flexible tubing.	After each use - Disconnect tube from filter. Wash tubing with warm soapy water, rinse and Alcohol (70%) wash with syringe through a hose, hang and allow to air dry
Hydro Wands - Microdermabrasion	After each use the wand should be cleaned by soaking in enzymatic detergent for 15 min., then be washed in hot running water and the abrasive surface scrubbed with brush provided. Then wand can be placed in disinfecting solution, use proper soak time - over soaking can corrode wands. - Also, all wand parts can be steam sterilized (Autoclave) except Plastic Product Cylinder.	After each use - Wash with warm soapy water, scrub abrasive surface with a wire brush, spray with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant (follow contact time instructions), rinse and autoclave with the wire (all metal) brush. Plastic cylinder -wash with warm water and soap, rinse and air dry

<b>Esthetics</b>	<b>Manufacturer's Recommendation where applicable</b>	<b>Proposed Improved Steps</b>
HEPA Filter	Does not require cleaning but after multiple procedures, (approximately 250 treatments) replace the cap on the vacuum inlet and dispose as a biohazard.	Same procedure - Dispose in sharps container
Filter Discs	One time use and must be disposed as a biohazard	One time use - Dispose in sharps container
Instrument Tray (aluminum)		Wash with warm soapy water, air dry, then apply an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant and air dry
Acrylic Jar		Wash with hot soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher
Glass Jar & Beakers		Wash with hot soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher
Rubber, Plastic & Stainless Bowls		Wash with hot soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher
Measuring Cups, Spoons & Funnels		Wash with hot soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher
Sprayers & Dispenser Bottles		Wash with hot soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher
Tweezers (all metal)		Wash with warm soapy water, spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, use cotton swab to get into nooks and crannies if needed, rinse and autoclave
Extractors (all metal)		Wash with warm soapy water, spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, use cotton swab to get into nooks and crannies if needed, rinse and autoclave
Scissors (all metal)		Wash with warm soapy water, spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, use cotton swab to get into nooks and crannies if needed, rinse and autoclave
Spatulas - (rubber or plastic)		Wash with hot soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher
Mask Brush	Wash with warm water & shampoo, rinse & air dry	One-time use, give to guest or dispose
Fan Brush	Wash with warm water & shampoo, rinse & air dry	One-time use, give to guest or dispose

<b>Nails</b>	<b>Manufacturer's Recommendation where applicable</b>	<b>Proposed Improved Steps</b>
Paraffin Warmer	No abrasive cleansers - Use all purpose cleaner inside and outside	Guest's hands and feet not to be dipped into the paraffin tub - Dispense paraffin into individual bags, slip hands and feet in - use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, wipe to clean container exterior & interior when changed, air dry
Nippers (cuticle) (all metal)		Wash with warm soapy water, spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, use cotton swab to get into nooks and crannies if needed, rinse and autoclave
Nail Clipper (all metal)		Wash with warm soapy water, spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, use cotton swab to get into nooks and crannies if needed, rinse and autoclave
Toenail Clipper (all metal)		Wash with warm soapy water, spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, use cotton swab to get into nooks and crannies if needed, rinse and autoclave
Ingrown Toenail File (all metal)		Wash with warm soapy water, spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, use a cotton swab to get into nooks and crannies if needed, rinse and autoclave
Dappen Dish		Wash with warm soapy water, air dry or use dishwasher
Contouring Files & Buffers		One-time use - give to guest or dispose
Pipe-less Pedicure Tubs - Shell	Drain water - Use non-abrasive antibacterial cleaner - Rinse - Then spray with EPA-registered disinfectant - allow to remain on the surface according to specifications - rinse	Drain water - spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant. Allow proper contact time rinse and re-fill tub as needed
Pedicure Jet Assembly	Remove both Jet assemblies from tub basin - Disassemble (3 parts) clean with non-abrasive cleaner - Rinse - Then spray surfaces with disinfectant - leave on required time and rinse - reassemble and return to tub basin	Disassemble, wash with warm soapy water, spray thoroughly with an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant, use a cotton swab to get into nooks and crannies, use proper contact time, rinse and air dry. Alternate disinfected Jet Assemblies for each guest.
LED Flexible Table Lamp	Disconnect - Unplug from the electric socket - Wipe with a damp soft cloth and dry off. <b>DO NOT USE</b> spray cleaners and ensure that the liquid does not enter the lamp housing	Unplug and let lights cool - Use an EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectant wipe. <b>DO NOT USE</b> spray cleaners and ensure that the liquid does not enter the lamp housing
<b>Prep Room - Dispensary</b>	<b>Manufacturer's Recommendation where applicable</b>	<b>Proposed Improved Steps</b>
Autoclave - Steam Sterilizer	Clean interior & exterior with warm soapy water, ensuring the electrical parts are kept dry	Same procedure - <b>Use only distilled water for operating autoclave</b>

## **Conclusion**

Having the knowledge and ability to make positive changes towards a cleaner spa environment for the guests and staff is both a compelling and rewarding endeavor. The advantages for procedures utilizing multiple cleaning steps, EPA registered hospital-grade disinfectants and autoclaves are most beneficial for the ever evolving spa experience.

This is clearly a key next step in growing the bridge between spas and medicine.

With physicians increasingly recognizing the value of massage, meditation, physical activity and relaxation for their patients, the opportunities for spas to develop ongoing referral relationships can be established. This can be enhanced tremendously when referring physicians are assured that the multiple step procedures for cleanliness are observed in the spa, as in the hospitals and medical offices that they practice in.

Wouldn't your spa enjoy seeing guest surveys with a 100% satisfaction rating on cleanliness from every guest visit?

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