Policy Governing the Selection of Surgical Draping and Gowning Materials for the Operating Room

PART I. THE POLICY

Surgical drapes and gowns used during surgical procedures may be a link in the prevention of wound infection through implementation of proper aseptic technique. The primary function of surgical drapes are to define and maintain the sterile field during surgery by isolating the surgical site and preventing microbes from contaminated areas from migrating to aseptic areas. Disposable drapes provide an effective barrier.

Part II. Implementation of the Policy

A. The following recommended properties are intended as achievable recommendations representing what is believed to be an optimal level of practice:

1. All surgical drapes and gowns should be made of materials that establish a barrier to moist particles, dry particles and repellency to sprayed, splashed, pooled or puddled liquids.

2. Materials should be resistant to tears, punctures, strains and abrasions.

3. Surgical drapes and gowns should be non-linting to prevent bacterial born tissue infections.

4. Surgical drapes and gowns should be made of materials that are safe and comfortable for use in the OR environment.
   
   a. Materials should meet or exceed the recommendations of the National Fire Protection Agency regulations. All materials should be considered potentially flammable only needing a combination of circumstances to result in a fire.

   b. Material should maintain an aseptic barrier when used according to manufacturers’ directions.

5. Surgical drapes and gowns should be resistant to “Blood Strike Through.” Resistance should be defined in terms of penetration by blood and body fluids over time and under expected conditions.

6. The material must be comfortable and effective for personal protection; i.e., resistance to blood and body fluids as it relates to Universal Precautions and the Center for Disease control and OSHA guidelines.
a. Blood and body fluids are the primary agents of transmission of HIV and Hepatitis B. If infected blood strikes through a garment to such a degree as it allows significant amounts to come into contact with the skin, the risk of exposure to the virus is heightened.

7. Materials should be non-abrasive and free of toxic ingredients, non-fast dyes and various odors.

8. Gowns should fit and allow freedom of movement. Stockinette cuffs of the gowns should be covered by gloves during the procedure.

9. The following procedures should be used for hospitals to access characteristics of drapes and gowns:
   a. The fabric must repel water.
   b. The fabric must not tear easily when you attempt to rep it.
   c. Lint particles should not be seen with the naked eye.
   d. The fabric should not ignite by a hot wire cautery drawn through the fabric at a speed of about one-inch per second at ambient oxygen levels.

10. There are three types of gowns available in accordance with Universal Precautions and the OSHA guidelines for personal protective equipment. They are:
   a. Non-reinforced Gown
   b. Reinforced Gown
   c. Poly-reinforced Gown

As new products come on the market, the materials management department will trial new gowns, therefore, company product names will never be standardized. OSHA regulations standards will always be maintained in every product used in the operative setting.

B. Exceptions

None

C. Revision

Revision of this policy requires the approval of the Director of the Operating Room.

Attachments:

No Attachments

Approval Signatures

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