



GERMICIDAL DETERGENTS IN STERILE PROCESSING



ENZYMATIC EXPERT SERIES

 **BEYOND**
CLEAN



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The word “germicidal” is in heavy use now in the era of Covid-19. “Cidal” means killing or inactivating. Germicidal is a generic word for products that kill germs. In healthcare, germs that cause disease are referred to as pathogens. Chemical products to inactivate (kill) pathogens are called antimicrobials or disinfectants. Germicidal detergents are also known as cleaner/disinfectants.

When using this type of product in Sterile Processing to inactivate (kill) pathogens, the product **MUST** have EPA registration with the EPA number noted on the label. Germicidal detergent or cleaner/disinfectant product labels must also state application as a cleaner and include instructions for how to use as a cleaner. All germicidal detergent labels must list the active chemical agents for disinfection action. But the product may have other ingredients listed in section 3 of the SDS (Safety Data Sheet). Why is this important to the Sterile Processing Technician?

1. Device instructions for cleaning may specify chemicals that are incompatible with the device. Look on **BOTH** the label and the SDS for potential problem chemicals.
2. Cleaner/Disinfectants may claim cleaning properties but if alcohol content in ready to use or diluted use form is over 15%, the product may fixate proteins and blood making cleaning **MORE** difficult.

Some detergents may be presented to Sterile Processing as effective to kill pathogens and make items safe for the Assembly side. If the detergent label does not have EPA registration, the disinfectant claim is inappropriate and unreliable.

Beyond Clean Enzymatic Expert Biography:

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Peggy Spitzer is a Colorado native with over 30 years of combined experience as a healthcare provider, college faculty and clinic manager. Currently she is clinical education manager at Certol Intl., a manufacturer of detergents and disinfectants for healthcare. She develops and presents education programs to hospital and dental professional groups focusing on infection prevention, instrument processing and best practices for chemicals. Peggy is a past president, past secretary and current treasurer of the Rocky Mountain Central Sterile Chapter promoting education and certification for Sterile Processing professionals. She is an active speaker for APIC and Sterile Processing professional groups and consultant to the Colorado State Dental Board. A special highlight was speaking at the national IAHCSSMM convention in 2019.

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