

Home Office Minimum Standards for Aseptic Surgery

1. Instruments

- a. Instruments must be sterile (autoclaved) before starting aseptic surgery
- b. Use a fresh set for each animal
- c. If a fresh set is not available for batch surgery then a method of sterilising instruments between each animal must be in place

2. Consumables

- a. All consumables (e.g. swabs, needles, suture materials) must be sterile and used within their stated expiry dates.

3. Animal preparation



- a. Clip and prep the animal for surgery in an area which is separate from the operating room/area
- b. Clip and disinfect the incision site adequately using organic iodine or chlorhexidine solutions. Avoid alcohol as a disinfectant
- c. Always cover the animal and bench with sterile drapes, leaving the surgical area exposed

4. Surgeon preparation

- a. Use a clean gown (preferably sterile) or cover-all
- b. Consider the use of protective, clean head coverings
- c. Wash your hands and use sterile gloves – ensuring that they remain sterile as you put them on

5. During Surgery

- a. Do not touch anything that is not sterile with sterile surgical gloves
- b. Only put down instruments in the sterile field
- c. If you need to touch a non-sterile surface, e.g. anaesthetic machine, either change gloves immediately afterwards or use a sterile swab and immediately discard it

Minimum Standards for Aseptic Surgery		
		
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all your surgical equipment ready in advance • Consult the NVS or NACWO before starting any surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not arrive unprepared and expect everything to be available and ready
Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sterilised surgical instruments and consumables for each animal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol/chlorhexidine does NOT sterilise the instruments • Do not put sterile instruments down onto the bench
Animal Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the skin of the animal adequately • Use sterile drapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol is ineffective for skin preparation • Don't contaminate the sterile field with non-sterile items
Surgeon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a clean, preferably sterile, gown or coverall • Wash your hands • Wear sterile gloves and change them if they become contaminated or punctured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO NOT touch non-sterile surfaces after gloving up. This includes the fur of the animal, anaesthetic machine, consumables and your phone! • Do not allow the suture material to drag over a non-sterile surface