



*South Eastman Health/Santé Sud-Est Inc.*

	<b>No: SC-INTRA005</b>
<b>Approved By:</b> Executive Management Committee	<b>Source: Regional Client Care Manual</b> <b>Category: Surgical Care</b>
<b>New/Replaces:</b> <b>Date Approved: May 15, 2001</b> <b>Reviewed:</b> <b>Revised:</b>	<b>Subject: Sponge, Needle and Instrument Count</b>

## **POLICY**

All surgical supplies will be accounted for after the completion of a surgical procedure.

## **PROCEDURE**

1. Sponge, needle, blades and nibs, and instrument counts will be conducted whenever entering a body cavity.
2. Counts are done four times:
  - At the time of wrapping prior to sterilization
  - Just before surgery, by the circulating and scrub nurses
  - At closure, by the circulating and scrub nurses of first layer.
  - At closure of skin (sponges, needles, blades and ribs only).
  - Additional count in procedure involving a cavity within a cavity e.g., C-sections, hysterectomy.
3. The circulating and scrub nurses count audibly.
4. The circulating nurse records the number of sponges, needles and instruments on the Intraoperative Count Sheet.
5. The circulating nurse records and reports the results of the final count on the Operative Record and the Intraoperative Count Sheet.
6. Specific to type of count: depending on nature of procedure.

### a) SPONGE

1. Count all sponges used on the sterile field.

2. Separate each sponge or flat for counting.
3. Radiopaque all sponges used in surgery and not to be left in the wound after closure.
4. Clip instruments onto lap sponges or packs when they are placed in the abdominal cavity.
5. Discard sponges into plastic lined floor kick bucket.
6. Discard flats into rectangular basin in operative field.
7. Ensure counted sponges do not leave the O.R.
8. Ensure radiopaque sponges are not used as dressings.
9. Give sponges to the surgeon one at a time, on an exchange basis.
10. Attach radiopaque flats and peanuts to an instrument when used in a body cavity.
11. Arrange sponges to allow rapid and easy count at closure (Circulating Nurse).

b) NEEDLE

1. Count all needles on the surgical set-up.
2. Count multipacked needles as each package is opened by both the scrub and circulating nurse.
3. Ensure all needles are mounted on a needle driver, sealed in packages, on a magnet or pinned in a towel to prevent loose needles.
4. Ensure there are no needles on the Mayo stand.
5. Secure used needles on a towel, or a needle counter.
6. Account for broken needles in their entirety.
7. Hand needles to the surgeon on an exchange basis.
8. Ensure needles are not taken from the OR during the procedure.
9. Count needles during the procedure (Scrub Nurse).

c) SUTURE REELS

1. Use and count radiopaque reels.

d) INSTRUMENT

1. Place the following instruments on a towel on a table for final count:  
(circulator)
  - a. All instruments that fall on the floor.
  - b. Instruments that are removed from the operative field with the specimen.
2. Ensure Mayo stand and table are kept tidy by grouping instruments as to kind.
3. Dry and return countable instruments from the splash basin to the Mayo.
4. Ensure instruments are not left on top of the patient.
5. Remove all instruments from the area about the incision while the surgeon inserts a pack.
6. Ensure all instruments received from the surgeon are intact such as blades on scalpels, screws on retractors and tips on vein strippers.

7. MANAGEMENT OF MISCOUNTS

- a) Take appropriate actions, before a patient is allowed to leave the OR, when a count is incorrect.
  - 1. Recount
  - 2. Notify surgeon.
  - 3. Search garbage, laundry and drapes.
  - 4. X-ray patient. Ensure the surgeon signs the Incident Report if he/she refuses the x-ray. The surgeon is responsible for retrieval /nonretrieval
  - 5. Complete Incident Report.
  - 6. Notify Manager.
  
- b) Take appropriate actions where a count is not performed (Stat Emergency).
  - 1. Keep track of items so as not to further jeopardize the patient (Scrub Nurse).
  - 2. Notify surgeon if count is not done.
  - 3. Document on the Intraoperative Nurses Record.

8. DOCUMENTATION

- a) Record all items on the count sheet (reverse of Intraoperative Nurses Record as they are counted.
  
- b) Use initial additions if other than circulator adding items.
  
- c) Check off items being counted in final count.
  
- d) Record results of final count on Intraoperative Nurses Record and OR Record (Circulating Nurse).
  
- e) Report (audibly) the results to the surgeon (Circulating Nurse).
  
- f) Sign the Count Sheet at the end of the case (Circulating and Scrub Nurses).