

Proper Sterilization of Acupuncture Needles

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The Infection Prevention and Control Program was asked to make a recommendation regarding the safe reuse of acupuncture needles and cupping equipment.

Instruments and needles that are used to pierce the skin are considered critical items. Because of the safety risk to healthcare workers as well as clients, current best practices recommend that all needles and sharps be single-use, disposable and sterile.^{1,2,3}

To further reduce the risk of injury, Occupational Health and Safety standards recommend that used needles be immediately placed in an appropriate sharps container that is close to the point of use.⁴

Items used for cupping treatment, which do not extract blood, must be cleaned and then low-level disinfected between clients. It is also recommended that cupping and acupuncture treatments be done on clean and intact skin.¹ Cups that do come in contact with blood should either be disposable² or be cleaned and sterilized in a manner that is safe and conforms to the manufacturer's guidelines.

References

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[\http://www.acupuncturephysio.org/ – retrieved August 2013]
3. Boudreau Y. and Weber A, "Health Hazard Evaluation Report 2000-0341-2839, Dallas Institute of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, Dallas, Texas," (Cincinnati, OH: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Publications Office, April 2001) iv.
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