

DECONTAMINATION GLOSSARY

AAMI	Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation.
Abrasive	A substance that tends to scrape or wear down by friction.
Acid	A substance that liberates hydrogen ions in solution; has a pH less than 7.
Alkaline	A substance that accepts hydrogen ions in solution; has pH greater than 7 (basic).
Base	A substance that accepts hydrogen ions; turns litmus paper blue; has a pH greater than 7.
Bioburden	The amount of microbial contamination; associated with specific items prior to sterilization.
Biofilm	Matrix that contains cells, living and dead, as well as polysaccharide, and is exuded by microorganisms when they are growing in water or water solutions. Prevent disinfectants and sterilants from reaching the microorganisms.
Bloodborne	Pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can produce pathogens disease in humans.
Cavitation	The rapid formation and collapse of low-pressure bubbles in liquids by means of mechanical forces; the process used by an ultrasonic cleaner in which the bubbles implode (burst inward) and dislodge soil from instruments.
Cleaning	Removal of all visible soil and any other foreign matter.

Contamination	The presence of pathogenic microorganisms on or in an object.
Corrosion	Process of wearing away the surface of a solid.
Cross-Contamination	The transfer of contaminants from one person or object to another.
Decontamination	Process that removes contaminating infectious agents and renders reusable medical products safe for handling.
Detergent	A cleaning agent composed of a “surface wetting agent” which reduces surface tension, a “builder” which is the principle cleaning agent, and a “sequestering or chelating agent” to suspend the soil.
Enzyme	Protein substance produced by living matter, which produces a reaction in another substance without changing itself.
ISO	International Standards Organization.
Lumen	The interior path or hole lengthwise through a tube or needle.
Microorganism	Forms of life, which are too small to see with the naked eye; bacteria, viruses, fungi.
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration; a Federal agency which provides regulations and standard working conditions for all employees. Concerned with a safe work environment and employee safety.
PPE	Personal protective equipment worn by an employee for protection against a hazard.