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Does An Ultrasonic Cleaner Alone Provide Sufficient Disinfection for Admittance Probe Tips?

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Ear tips used for tympanometry and acoustic reflex tests are available in either disposable or reusable formats, although most ear tips available to the hearing industry are packaged as disposable. Disposable ear tips are one-time use-only items that must be disposed of immediately after use. Product packaging will either contain verbiage “disposable” or a circle with the number 2 crossed out to indicate single-use only. In this situation, the use of an ultrasonic cleaner is mute since the ear tips cannot be reused.

In the event a provider has access to ear tips packaged as reusable, the chemical product used should be a hospital-grade disinfectant capable of high-level disinfection. For example, in the United States, glutaraldehyde, hydrogen peroxide, and peracetic acid with hydrogen peroxide have been cleared by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as viable high-level disinfectants.[1] Having said that, certain chemicals (e.g., glutaraldehyde) should not be placed in an ultrasonic

cleaner because the chemical should not be cavitated.

Ideally, the ultrasonic machine filled with ultrasonic cleaner should be used to clean reusable immittance ear tips. Once cleaned, the ear tips should be transferred to a tray filled with a hospital-grade chemical capable of achieving high-level disinfection. In the event reusable ear tips are contaminated with blood, blood by-products, pus, discharge, or copious amounts of cerumen, the tip should either be disposed of or cleaned and then sterilized before reuse.

References

1. CDC (2016). A rational approach to disinfection and sterilization. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/disinfection/rational-approach.html