GSI Product Disinfection and Covid-19

From the CDC. There is much to learn about the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Based on what is currently known about COVID-19, spread from person-to-person of this virus happens most frequently among close contacts (within about 6 feet). This type of transmission occurs via respiratory droplets. On the other hand, transmission of novel coronavirus to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented. Current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses.

Although there is evidence the novel coronavirus is one of the easiest types of viruses to kill on surfaces, scientists are still determining its exact nature and how big a role surface transmission plays in its spread. The US EPA is working to provide the public with information about disinfectants that can help slow its spread. On March 3, the EPA released a list of antimicrobial products for use against SARS-CoV-2, under an emerging viral pathogens program developed for just this kind of scenario. (The EPA regulates antimicrobial products as pesticides.) Under the program, makers of disinfectants can request approval to claim a product is expected to kill a particular virus based on its ability to kill similar viruses. The EPA's list of disinfectants presumed effective against SARS-CoV-2 contains several dozen antimicrobial products including ready-to-use sprays, concentrates, and wipes that GSI recommends for use with its' instruments. The emerging pathogens program sidesteps the lengthy review process that is typically required for vetting disinfectant efficacy claims, which requires the establishment of a standardized protocol and testing with the actual virus or an EPA-approved surrogate. As far as we know, no companies have sent the agency any efficacy data on the novel coronavirus or any surrogates.

The following recommendations for disinfection of GSI instruments presented in this document are not intended to replace or contradict policies in effect or procedures required for infection control at your facility.

GSI instruments are not designated as a 'sterile' device. Non-disposable parts of the system, including and patient cables, electrodes and electrode lead wires, headphone cushions, bone vibrator, and insert phone tubes which are in direct contact with the patient need to be disinfected between patients. This includes physically wiping down the equipment which contacts the patient using a disinfectant approved by your facility. Use of a non-alcohol-based disinfectant is recommended. Non-alcohol-based products contain the active ingredient referred to as quaternary ammonia compound or a hydrogen peroxide-based cleaner may be used. The quaternary ammonia compound and hydrogen peroxide are specifically designed to disinfect rubber, plastic, silicone, and acrylic products which are commonly used in hearing evaluation instruments. Remove disposable eartips or electrodes prior to disinfection.

Individual manufacturer's instruction should be followed for use of the disinfecting agent to provide an appropriate level of disinfection. The recommended contact time for common disinfectants ranges from 30 seconds to 10 minutes. Wiping them off too soon might clean the surface without disinfecting.

Visit https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2 to find the current list of products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19. Look for products that contain hydrogen peroxide or quaternary ammonium as the active ingredient.