

### Background

The Australian Sonographers Association (ASA) is dedicated to guiding the advancement of the sonography profession to ensure the community has access to quality sonographic services. A key strategic objective of the ASA is to promote and advocate for best practice in medical sonography through the development of evidence-based standards and guidelines. Implementing effective infection prevention and control practices is vital to providing high quality sonographic services to patients and ensuring a safe working environment. As such, the ASA has been developing infection prevention and control guidelines specifically focused on issues of most significance to sonography.

### **adapted summary of the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare***

In 2010 the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) developed evidence-based guidelines on infection prevention and control issues that affect healthcare professionals in all settings, entitled the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare*. These guidelines were developed in an effort to reduce the occurrence of healthcare associated infections nationally through improving the workplace practices of healthcare professionals.

The NHMRC guidelines are extensive and cover all aspects of healthcare, many of which are not applicable to a sonographer's day-to-day practice. Therefore, to support sonographers in their implementation of safe and effective infection control practices, the ASA has compiled extracts from the NHMRC guidelines that are most relevant to sonographers, entitled *Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines for Sonographers: An adapted summary of the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare*.

Issues covered in the adapted summary include:

- hand hygiene
- personal protective equipment
- handling and disposing of sharps
- routine management of the physical environment
- reprocessing of reusable instruments and equipment
- respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- organisational support.

Sonographers are advised to become familiar with the adapted summary and make every effort to follow these best practice guidelines as far as is practical. In the first instance, sonographers should follow their workplace protocols and departmental policies. If there are significant discrepancies between the guidelines in the adapted summary and a sonographer's workplace protocols or departmental policies, it is recommended that sonographers should seek to bring about change in their workplace through appropriate organisational channels.

### **safe use and storage of ultrasound gel**

The ASA guideline on *The safe use and storage of ultrasound gel* provides sonographers with best practice recommendations on how to minimise the risk of transmitting infection that may occur due to the use of contaminated ultrasound gel. In the past, contaminated ultrasound gel has been associated with outbreaks of infection in various settings and with various organisms. Implementing a range of infection prevention and hygiene practices in the safe use and storage of ultrasound gel can minimise the risk of microbial growth of microorganisms in gel, and as such, the potential subsequent infection of patients. For more information on how and why the recommendations included in the guideline were developed, refer to the ASA *Background Paper: The safe use and storage of ultrasound gel*.



# infection prevention and control for sonographers

ASA FAST FACTS  
UPDATED MAY 2013

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## **disinfection of intracavity ultrasound transducers**

Current national standards require intracavity ultrasound transducers to be reprocessed at minimum with an approved high-level instrument grade disinfectant. The ASA guideline on the *Disinfection of intracavity ultrasound transducers* further details the minimum Australian standard for the reprocessing of ultrasound transducers and lists the TGA approved high-level disinfectants which may be used on ultrasound transducers.

If you have any queries or feedback on the guidelines for infection prevention and control, please contact [policy@a-s-a.com.au](mailto:policy@a-s-a.com.au).

All ASA documents referred to in this fast fact can be found on the ASA website [www.a-s-a.com.au](http://www.a-s-a.com.au) under *quality practice>asa guidelines*.

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### **About the ASA**

The ASA guides the advancement of our profession to ensure the community has access to quality sonographic services. With a membership of over 70% of Australia's sonographers, the ASA has a clear mandate to advocate for best practice in sonography.