01.30 Storage of Dirty, Clean, and Sterile Supplies

Purpose
To identify appropriate storage areas for dirty, clean and sterile supplies

Audience
All employees of UTMB hospitals, clinics, Victory Lakes outpatient specialty care and surgical center, contract workers, volunteers, and students

Storage
- Dirty supplies should not be stored with clean and sterile supplies. Clean and sterile supplies may be stored together in the patient care areas. Sterile supplies should be stored in a designated storage area in the operating rooms and the Sterile Processing Department.

- All instruments to be returned to Sterile Processing shall be bagged in a non-red plastic bag and secured with tape. Sharp objects shall be placed in a hard container prior to bagging. These items should be transported in a manner that avoids contamination of personnel or the environment with particular attention to sharp items. Equipment and other items should be covered and should be moved in covered carts, closed containers, or closed plastic bags. These items should be received in the dirty side of Sterile Processing.

- Sterile materials should be stored at least eight to ten inches above the floor, at least 18 inches below the ceiling, and at least two inches away from outside walls. The items should be positioned so that packages are not crushed, bent, compressed, or punctured and so that their sterility is not otherwise compromised. Medical and surgical supplies should not be stored next to or under sinks, under exposed water or sewer pipes, or in any location where they can become wet. Storage of supplies on floors, window sills, and areas other than designated shelving, counters, or carts should be avoided.

References