We use a plastic container that is validated to hold our instruments for sterilization, so why can’t we keep our instruments in that plastic container when we place them into the ultrasonic cleaner? The container is designed to hold them open, so if we keep them in the container in the open position, it seems they should be able to stay open during cleaning.

A: Instrumentation undergoing ultrasonic cleaning indeed should be kept open; however, plastic material should not be placed into an ultrasonic cleaner because the plastic material will absorb the sound waves, which will interfere with the cleaning.

Source: ANSI/AAMI ST79:2017, Section 7.6.4.4.1, Ultrasonic Cleaning Equipment

Why can’t we use clear tubing that has a sterilization claim as tip protectors?

A: As with all other items used in the sterilization process, tip protectors must be validated for their use with a specific sterilization modality. It is recommended to use colored or tinted tip protectors. Clear and colorless tip protectors may be difficult for surgery personnel to see on the sterile field, which could result in a retained surgical item.

Source: New to the 2020 AORN Packaging Guideline

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