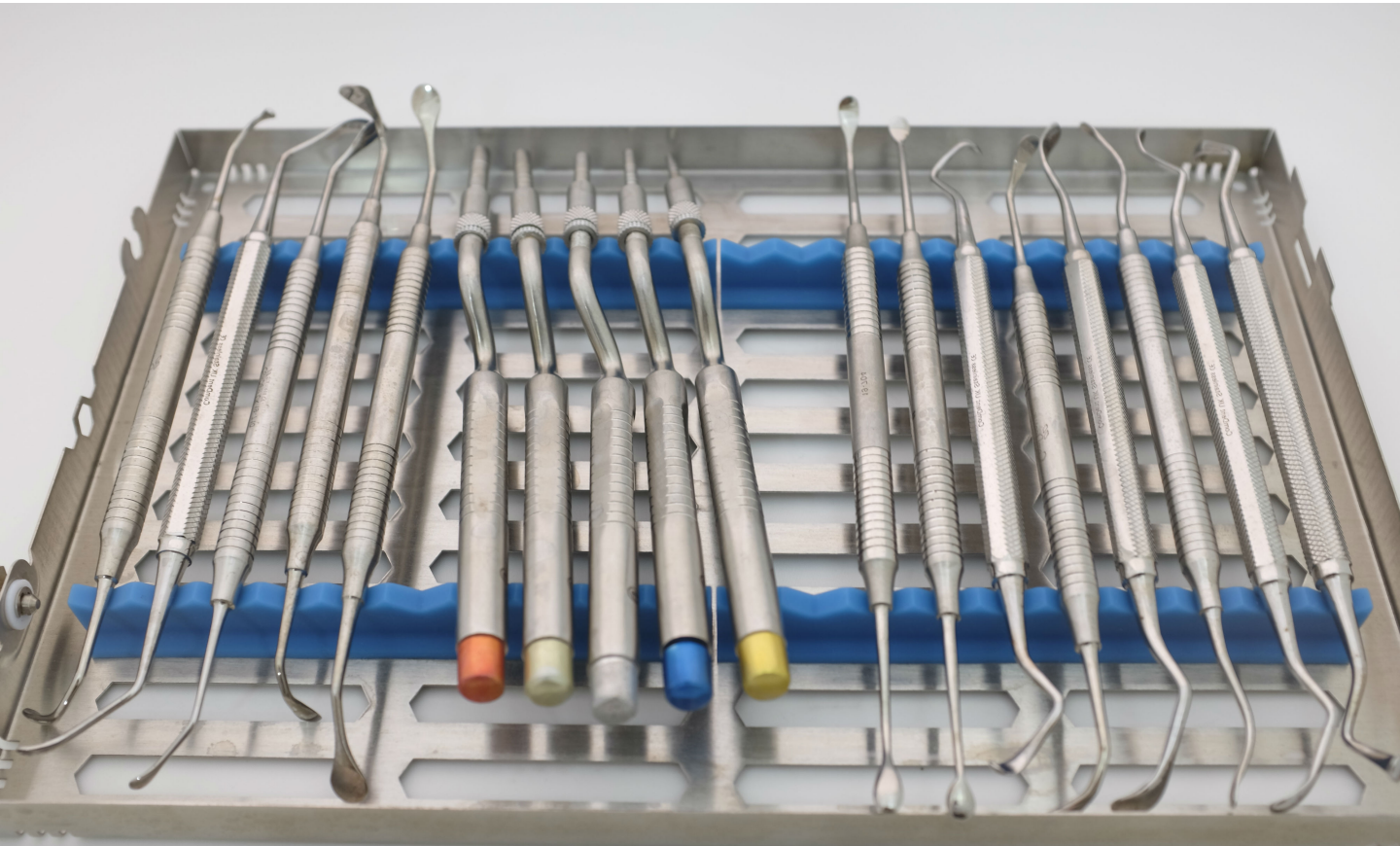




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Tips for Dental Instrument Organisation





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How many times has your assistant popped up during an appointment to find a specific instrument, only to take an extra five minutes trying to sort through dozens of supplies to find the right one? If this happens two or three times a day, you'll likely be working later than you should. With a great instrument organisation system, you can run your office more efficiently without taking valuable time away from your patients.

Why is Organisation Important?

Keep better track of where instruments are, when you need them

Careful storage prevents instrument damage and extends their use

Reduce or eliminate accidental injuries when sorting through sharp instruments

Newer or temporary staff can easily locate equipment

Cleaner, less cluttered work environment

Time-saving practices that allow for more efficient patient care

Knowing that your trays are equipped with the proper instruments prior to seating the patient



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Choose the Best Instrument Packaging System

With traditional sterilization pouches, you're only left with a few options, like: small, medium, and large. They all come in one colour and take extra time to sort through when unloading the autoclave or preparing for tray set up. Plus, paper and plastic instrument pouches tend to easily tear or if wet, allow microorganisms to spread to the instruments (requiring repackaging and re-sterilisation all over again.)

The reason many practices prefer instrument cassettes is that it saves time and makes organisation far more streamlined. That's because a cassette system can be color-coded with silicone add-ons, which visually tells the sterilization tech or assistant fetching instruments immediately what is inside, without them having to open anything. For example, the dentist's endodontic set could be color-coded blue, and his composite set could be orange, while the hygienist's scalers are green. The flexible colour systems work with any preferences that your office already has set up from existing organisation systems. Cassettes can easily be stacked on top of one another.

But what if you want the best of both worlds? You can still use your cassettes *with* your sterilization pouches, and the color-coding systems show through the plastic window. That way your instruments are sterile, sealed, and still easily organized.



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Make a Goal of Preventing Recontamination

What a lot of people fail to remember, is that storage between sterilization and instrument use can impact whether or not the dental instruments become re-contaminated *after* they've already been sterilized.

As part of your organisation system, it's important to have a clean storage area that is away from the contaminated instrument processing ("dirty") side of the sterilization equipment. A dry, protected place such as a drawer or cabinet that is reserved solely for sterilized instruments is preferred.

Practice good safety precautions to eliminate the risk of cross-contamination on hands or gloves in the sterilization and storage areas. This includes how doors/drawers are opened, and in which order items are touched or moved.

Store Instruments in Designated Areas

It's not uncommon for all dental instruments to be lumped into the same drawer or two, allowing staff to pick-and-choose when it's time to set up a tray. It's an unnecessary headache. Instead, consider loading your trays in advance, or purchasing divider systems that allow you to stack your instrument cassettes on top of one another in specific tubs or between dividers.

The short time investment that it takes to make your instrument organisation more streamlined will instantly impact your entire dental team. You'll likely ask yourself, "Why didn't I do this sooner?"