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Question: How can we reprocess "single use" GlideScope Blades during COVID-19 pandemic?

DICON Response: The practice of reprocessing single use devices (SUD) by original equipment manufacturers, third parties, and hospitals is not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). However, the FDA did provide a guidance document in 2000, which helped risk stratification to reprocessing of SUDs (see Flowchart 1 on next page). There are two Glidescope systems available

1. Single use system
2. Reusable system

Manufacturer's instructions for use (IFU) state "Do not reuse, reprocess, or resterilize single-use components. Reuse, reprocessing, or reprocessing may create a risk of contamination of the device."

Since glidescope blades are considered semi-critical items and come in contact with a patient's mucous membranes, and also expose healthcare workers to biologic material, we believe that reprocessing single use blades poses risks to both patients and healthcare personnel. This risk is likely increased in the current COVID-19 pandemic. The FDA has not released an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for reprocessing of single use glidescope blades to our knowledge.

Our recommendation for dealing with shortages of single-use blades/devices include:
(1) buy reusable systems and reprocess per manufacturer IFU
(2) buy more single use systems
(3) do fewer procedures

If hospitals are considering reprocessing single use or disposable glidescope blades, they should have considered and exhausted all above options. Approaches to reprocessing single use glidescope blades have not been systematically studied and may have risks of residual contamination and/or corrosion to the blade. We are aware that other facilities have developed SOPs for reprocessing single use glidescope blades, but DICON cannot attest to the safety or accuracy of these methods.

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Flowchart 1 – Infection Risk