

# Dissection Kit Care



## Introduction

Many metals react with oxygen to form a new chemical compound. For example, when iron reacts with oxygen it will form red iron oxide,  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  more commonly known as rust. Dissection instruments are commonly composed of iron (in the form of steel). Some steel is considered stainless, whereas other steel blends are not. To maximize the lifespan of dissection instruments, it is important to clean and store them using methods that will inhibit rust development.

## Safety Precautions

*Handle scalpels, dissection needles and other sharp instruments with care. Always cut away from the body and other people. Do not use excessive force when working with or cleaning sharp instruments. Always wear chemical splash goggles, chemical resistant gloves, and chemical resistant apron when working with preserved specimens. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before leaving the laboratory.*

## Tips to Help Prevent Rust

- Rinse instruments and dissection pan after each use. Make sure to dry thoroughly either with a cloth or paper towel.
- If the dissection pan contains rubber inserts, wash and dry them separately. Leaving the insert in the pan will harbor moisture and cause the pan to corrode faster. Dry the pan on edge to allow the maximum surface area to be exposed to air.
- Always remove scalpel blades at the end of each dissection unit and carefully dispose of in a sharps container.
- Dispose of any instruments that are damaged and cannot be repaired.
- Clean instruments with Alconox® cleaning compound.
  - Make cleaning detergent by mixing one teaspoon of Alconox with one liter of water.
  - Carefully soak and wipe each piece of equipment.
  - Rinse with water and dry thoroughly according to the following instructions.
- Drying instruments thoroughly is the single most important factor in preventing rust.
  - Dry as completely as possible using towels or paper towels.
  - If possible, allow a fan to circulate the air around the tools until each object is dried thoroughly.
  - If a fan is not available, place instruments on a towel near a sunny window. Replace the towels when the items are turned over.
- For long term storage, make sure instruments are completely dry and place them in a plastic bin with a desiccant such as a cup filled with Drierite®.
- Purchase instruments made with stainless steel or surgical steel. Although stainless steel instruments are initially more expensive, they tend to last longer before corroding.

**Materials for *Dissection Kit Care* are available from Flinn Scientific, Inc**

Catalog No.	Description
A0126	Alconox® Cleaner
D0012	Drierite®

Consult your *Flinn Scientific Catalog/Reference Manual* for current prices.