

HPV (HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS) IN ENT



WHAT IS HPV?

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a small, non-enveloped virus of which over 200 types have been identified. HPV types are classified as either low-risk, for their implication in less serious diseases such as warts, or high-risk, for their implication in cancers in areas such as the head, neck and cervix.¹

High-risk types of HPV are 16 and 18. They are responsible for causing cancers, including in the neck, head and throat area. Across the world, 90% of oropharyngeal cancers are caused by HPV.²

HOW IS HPV TRANSMITTED?

HPV is transmitted through intimate skin-to-skin and mucosa-to-mucosa contact³. It is also spread to the mouth by oral sex⁴ and from mouth-to-mouth by French kissing⁵.

Transmission routes of HPV are widely documented in scientific literature and the risks associated with contraction of the virus are highlighted by healthcare institutions such as the National Health Service (NHS)⁶ and Cancer Research UK⁷. Moreover, transmission via objects and surfaces in the healthcare environment (nosocomial transmission) from inadequate disinfection practices is also possible.

HPV ON MEDICAL DEVICES

Medical devices used to examine the neck and throat, such as nasendoscopes, can be carriers of HPV if not disinfected properly. More than 75 million endoscope procedures are performed annually⁸. If inadequately disinfected, HPV can survive on a surface for up to seven days⁹. This means a nasendoscope could be harbouring the virus which could infect the next patient.

NOT ALL HIGH-LEVEL DISINFECTANTS KILL HPV

Medical devices touching mucous membranes, such as endoscopes, require high-level disinfection (HLD). High-level disinfectants (HLDs) destroy all microorganisms, excluding high amounts of bacterial spores. However, not all high-level disinfectants are efficacious against HPV¹⁰. It is paramount that high-level disinfectants used on nasendoscopes or any other device used to examine the head and neck area, are efficacious against HPV.

TRISTEL KILLS HPV!

The Tristel Trio Wipes System and Tristel Duo are effective against HPV types 16 and 18 in a 30-second contact time. Bespoke testing has been performed with The Tristel Trio Wipes System and Tristel Duo on a nasendoscope contaminated with HPV.

Studies on devices such as nasendoscopes are the most representative forms of testing as they simulate the conditions which could be expected in real life. This provides additional assurances to both the patient and the healthcare worker within the clinical use of the high-level disinfectant.

Testing performed on the nasendoscope is set for peer review and publishing shortly. At the time of writing, Tristel is the first manufacturer to perform testing against HPV on a real-life device.

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TristelTM
WE HAVE CHEMISTRY.

Created by: Tristel Solutions Limited, Lynx Business Park, Cambs, UK, CB8 7NY
T +44 (0) 1638 721500 - E mail@tristel.com - W www.tristel.com

Hong Kong & Taiwan: Tristel Asia Limited, 21st Floor,
168 Electric Road, North Point, Hong Kong
T +852 2895 6968 - F +852 2869 4388

Australia: Tristel Pty Ltd, 40/328 Reserve Road, Cheltenham, VIC 3192
T 1300 680 898 - F +61 (0)3 9533 6193 - E mail-au@tristel.com

New Zealand: Tristel New Zealand Limited,
P.O. Box 15451, Tauranga, New Zealand
T +64 (0)7 5771560 - F +64 (0)7 5771567 - E info@tristel.co.nz