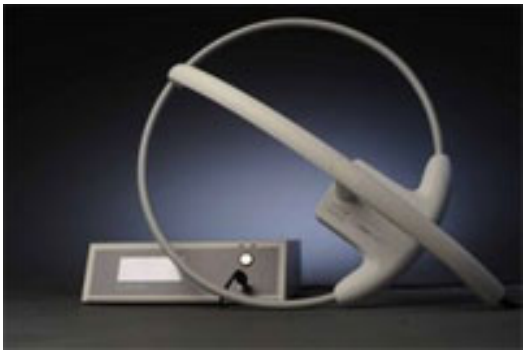
RFID-Based Solution To Prevent Retained Sponges



Medline Industries, Inc. has been named the exclusive distributor for the SmartWand-DTX™ and SmartSponge® System, the only FDA-cleared systems using radio-frequency identification to both count and locate surgical sponges. The systems, created by ClearCount Medical Solutions, use a technology featuring chip-embedded sponges to count and locate sponges during surgery which, in turn, helps eliminate surgical errors and improve patient safety.

The system, SmartWand-DTX, is an RFID-based solution that allows hospitals a low-cost way to begin the prevention of retained sponges, on a platform that can grow with the patient safety initiative. The system allows caregivers to wand over an unopened pack of sponges to get a count, then validate their “count-out” with another wand over used sponges after surgery. If the counts don’t match, the surgeon wands over the patient to locate the missing sponge.

According to the company, integrating radio frequency identification (RFID) chip technology into surgical sponges—the sterile, absorbent textiles used inside a patient during an operation—gives surgeons and operating room teams a new tool to prevent the anxiety of a potentially devastating operating room error.

For those hospitals that want to outfit some ORs with a more “closed-loop” system, the SmartSponge System is also available, providing a SmartBucket for collection of the sponges. SmartWand-DTX and SmartSponge® System are the only systems based on RFID-technology, the only technology to give each sponge a unique ID, so each sponge is accounted for at all times.

Each sponge has its own ID number coded in its RFID tag. The SmartSponge System can read and record the unique ID number of each sponge as it comes out of its packaging in the OR, as it is used in the patient, and as it is removed and disposed of. Both the SmartSponge and SmartWand-DTX count multiple sponges and read through blood and tissue, and they can locate a missing tagged sponge using radio waves to signal the RFID tag to identify itself. Both systems also use the same RFID-tagged consumables, providing hospitals for the first time with a choice of devices

to best address the unique conditions of each OR.

For more information, visit www.clearcount.com [1] and www.medline.com [2]

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