

Did you know... Operating rooms produce **20–33% of a hospital's total waste**, and a large chunk is **potentially recyclable**.

- **Surgical Kits:** frequently include instruments not used; leads to wasted sterilization and packaging processes
- **Single-Use Sterile Supplies:** gowns, gloves, drapes, syringes; even unopened items become waste once the sterile field is broken
- **Packaging Waste:** plastic, paper, and cardboard packaging from sterile supplies are often not recycled due to contamination concerns or lack of systems



What can YOU do in May?

- Use the TIME OUT and DEBRIEF to raise awareness!
- Think twice before requesting individual peel pack items
- Only open gowns, gloves for those in the room
- Ask circulators to avoid opening any disposable items unless specifically requested and switch to reusable items (when safe); avoid disposable clip appliers, retractors and other items
- Advocate for clearly labeled recycling bins in the OR and peri-op areas and start an education campaign for what is recyclable: https://practicegreenhealth.org/sites/default/files/upload-files/gorimpmod-recycling_r7_web_0.pdf

To learn more, check out these references:

- The impact of waste reduction in general surgery operating rooms. Am J Surg 2022 Dec;224(6):1370-1373. doi: 10.1016/j.amjsurg.2022.10.033.
- Reducing disposable surgical items: decreasing environmental impact and cost ...J Surg Res. 2023 Aug;288:309-314. doi: 10.1016/j.jss.2023.02.035.
- Practice Greenhealth. Sustainability Benchmarking Report. 2010. Available at: www.practicegreenhealth.org

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