



# A Plastic-Free Alternative: Switching to Reusable Speculums

## Why Switch?



### Environment

Reusable stainless steel speculums outperform their single-use acrylic counterparts in terms of landfill waste, carbon emissions, air quality, and fossil fuel depletion.



### Cost

Disposable speculums can be purchased in Alberta (2022) for approximately \$2.29/unit.

Medium metal speculums cost \$26.80 each. The price per unit for a reusable speculum with an estimated 50 uses per year for a 10 year lifetime would be 5¢ per use before disinfection cost.



### Safety

Stainless steel speculums can improve sustainability while maintaining clinical utility and safety standards.

Not all disposable speculums are listed as sterile.

## How are they cleaned?

Stainless steel speculums need, at minimum, a high-level disinfection, if not sterilization between each pelvic exam use. They must be sterilized for use in IUD insertions. See the [AHS sterilization guidelines here](#).

If you are considering purchasing a steam-sterilizing system in clinic, there is a [CPSA checklist](#) of criteria to consider to ensure it will meet requirements.

To maintain safety standards in the use of a sterilizing device, follow the [CPSA requirements](#) for the medical device reprocessing.

To further reduce waste, disposable sterilizing pouches can be replaced with reusable pouches. These can be used a minimum of 200 times before replacing. The reusable options from Enviropouch have been recommended by the Hamilton Family Health Team Green Initiative and can be [purchased online](#).

## References

Alberta Health, Government of Alberta (2019). Reusable & Single-Use Medical Devices Standards: Standards for the reprocessing of reusable medical devices and for the use of single-use medical devices in all health care facilities and settings. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/fd371ac2-b2be-49ac-93ef-43865a0bc0fb/resource/56c1cd3c-b617-4d91-947d-3e0e4a68cd09/download/health-reusable-single-use-medical-devices-standards.pdf>

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