

## **COVID-19 and Instrument Hygiene for Musicians**

### **Sterilization vs. Disinfection**

### **Instrument Hygiene**

1. All musicians or students should have their own instrument if possible.
2. All musicians or students should have their own mouthpiece if possible.
3. Any musicians sharing reed instruments **MUST** have their own individual reeds. Reeds should **NEVER** be shared.

#### **Mouthpieces**

Mouthpieces (including flute headjoints and saxophone neck crooks) are essential parts of wind instruments. Adhering to the following procedures will help to keep mouthpieces and instruments clean and safe for continued use.

#### **Cleaning the Flute Head Joint**

1. Using a cotton swab saturated with denatured, isopropyl alcohol, carefully clean around the embouchure hole.
2. Alcohol wipes can be used on the flute's lip plate to kill germs.
3. Using a soft, lint-free silk cloth inserted into the cleaning rod, clean the inside of the headjoint.
4. Do not run the headjoint under water as it may saturate and eventually shrink the headjoint cork.

#### **Clarinets and Saxophones**

1. Mouthpieces should be swabbed after each use and cleaned weekly.
2. Select a small container that will accommodate the mouthpiece vertically and place the mouthpiece, tip down, into the container (clarinets – DO NOT get the cork wet!).
3. Fill the container just past the window of the mouthpiece with a solution of 50% water and 50% white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide. Protect clarinet mouthpiece cork from moisture.
4. After the mouthpiece has soaked for fifteen minutes, use an appropriately sized mouthpiece brush to remove any calcium deposits or other residue from inside and outside surfaces. This step may need to be repeated if the mouthpiece is excessively dirty.
5. Rinse the mouthpiece thoroughly and then saturate with disinfectant solution. Place on paper towel and wait one minute.
6. Wipe dry with paper towel.
7. Note: Metal saxophone mouthpieces clean up well with hot water, mild dish soap (not dishwasher detergent), and a mouthpiece brush. Disinfectant solution is also safe for metal mouthpieces.

#### **Cleaning Saxophone Necks (Crooks)**

1. Swabs are available to clean the inside of the saxophone neck. However, many saxophonists use a flexible bottlebrush and toothbrush to accomplish the same results.
2. The saxophone neck should be swabbed after each use and cleaned weekly.
3. Use the bottlebrush with mild, soapy water to clean the inside of the neck.
4. Rinse under running water.
5. Disinfectant solution may be used on the inside of the neck if desired. Place on paper towel for one minute.
6. Rinse again under running water, dry, and place in the case.

### **Cleaning Brass Instrument Mouthpieces**

1. Mouthpieces should be cleaned monthly.
2. Use a cloth soaked in warm, soapy water to clean the outside of the mouthpiece.
3. Use a mouthpiece brush with warm, soapy water to clean the inside.
4. Rinse the mouthpiece and dry thoroughly.
5. Disinfectant solution may be used on the mouthpiece at this time. Place on paper towel for one minute.
6. Wipe dry with paper towel.

### **Choosing a Disinfectant for Musical Instruments**

1. Sterisol Germicide Solution can be safely used on plastics, hard rubbers, and metals.
2. Mi-T-Mist Mouthpiece Cleanser can be used on most materials. It is **NOT** recommended for use on hard rubber mouthpieces.
3. Isopropyl alcohol wipes are safe for most materials. They are NOT recommended for use on hard rubber mouthpieces.
4. A solution made with 50% water and 50% white vinegar or 50% water and 50% hydrogen peroxide can be safely used on plastics, hard rubbers, and metals.

While other potential disinfectants, including alcohol, boiling water, and bleach can be used as general disinfectants, they are not typically recommended for use on mouthpieces or instruments due to their potential effect on skin, plastics, and metals.

1. Whichever disinfectants are chosen, it is crucial to read the product instructions and follow them closely.
2. Disinfectants do not remove dirt, so mouthpieces and instruments must be cleaned thoroughly before using.