

Aiken Regional's new device kills germs and increases patient safety



Stephanie Turner Email stephaniedturnerAS

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(Staff Photos by Stephanie Turner)

Don Wright is one of the people trained to use Aiken Regional Medical Centers' new Steriliz's R-D Rapid Disinfector, which uses radiation light to sterilize the room it's in.

Aiken Regional Medical Centers' new device harnesses a powerful ultraviolet radiation to better kill lingering germs and thus keep their patients safe.

Steriliz's R-D Rapid Disinfector uses ultraviolet-C light, the sun's most damaging radiation that doesn't penetrate the earth's surface, to "totally damage and mangle the genetic material of any cell that it penetrates," said Don Wright, the hospital's infection preventionist. "A cell without its genetic material is a dead cell."



After the room is stripped and cleaned using Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's standards, a sensor, that Wright says "can be programmed to think its any type of germ," is placed in every corner.

Then, Wright or a trained staff member will leave the room, close the door and turn the device on using a programmed tablet.

To achieve maximum success, Wright said their two devices are often set to destroy "the most difficult thing to kill."





While the device is operating, the staff member can observe through the window and track its progress using the tablet, which reports the status on every room in the hospital.

No one is allowed in the room while the device is operating, and the procedure usually takes no longer than 15 minutes.

“Patient safety is our top priority,” Wright said in a release. “We clean the rooms with CDC-approved traditional cleaning methods, but there are always areas that are hard to reach. We felt it was important to add an additional layer of disinfection protection to ensure our patients receive the best care.”

Once the device is finished, it is safe to reenter the room.

“As soon as the light goes out, the energy is gone,” Wright said. “There is no residual, toxic chemical left in this room.”

Overall, with frequent use, the device promises to “decrease the pool of pathogens (which cause diseases),” “reduce risks of illness and infections for patients, visitors and staff” and “enhance cleaning and environmental services staff effectiveness,” according to Steriliz’s website.

“We don’t want patients to pick something up they didn’t come up with,” Wright said.

For more information on germs and their effects, visit www.cdc.gov.

Stephanie Turner graduated from Valdosta State University in 2012.

She then signed on with the Aiken Standard, where she is now the arts and entertainment reporter.

Aiken Regional Hospital UV disinfectors

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