

A solid green horizontal bar.

THE TRUTH ABOUT PULP



To the average person pulp is little more than a wet shapeless mass of material usually associated with either making paper or the recycling process.

However, if you're providing care to vulnerable adults or those in a clinical setting, pulp is so much more, and so much more important.

Medical Pulp utensils in the healthcare sector are a vital element to fighting the spread of infectious diseases. Used in pulp macerators, they are a single use item that allows clinicians to safely dispose of any waste by depositing the utensil in its entirety in to the macerator.

This allows for all infectious material to be flushed into the sewer system.

However, despite their obvious advantages over metal and plastic utensils, there are a number of misconceptions surrounding them.

1. They're Machine Specific

One of the most common issues we hear is that specific pulp utensils are only compatible with the associated brand of machine.

This simply isn't true. All pulp utensils are made to the same requirements – barring a few subtle differences – and so are compatible with any pulp macerator currently on the market.

2. Pulp isn't waterproof

Pulp is designed for a single use and being made of paper does make it absorbent. However, every pulp utensil has a waterproof coating to prevent seepage.

In practical terms, that lining can comfortably hold liquid for up to 20 hours, although we would recommend no more than 4 primarily due to the significant risk of infection.

This can be compromised over time but as bedpans should be disposed of immediately after use this shouldn't be an issue.

Besides, pulp utensils need to break down quickly during the maceration cycle so if your pulp utensils were entirely waterproof they would cause major blockages during the maceration process.

If your pulp utensils – particularly bedpans – are being compromised, try using pulp supports to protect them during use.

If a utensil is compromised during use, then maceratable bags are available to safely contain the utensil and dispose of it without putting patients or clinicians at risk.

3. They Cause Blockages

In truth, pulp utensils *can* cause blockages, but this has nothing to do with the utensil. In our experience blockages related to utensils are usually caused by overloading the machine, operating the machine incorrectly or the machine itself being at fault – either through design or malfunction.

Utensils, because they require soddening before maceration, are reliant on the hardware being up to the task.

Because our pulp macerators spray water throughout the cycle and pulverise the utensils into pieces only millimetres in size, blockages are never a problem.



4. They're Expensive

Whilst pulp utensils represent an ongoing investment, the reality is unit for unit, pulp utensils are a lower cost item than plastic or metal ones. Especially when you factor in the associated infection control risks of reusable bedpans.

The other major advantage is you can stockpile pulp utensils in far greater numbers than plastic and metal because they are stackable take up less space in doing so.

Logistically this represents a huge benefit as clinicians aren't under pressure to keep on top of cleaning cycles or find bedpans elsewhere to meet periods of high demand.

5. They're bad for the environment

Pulp utensils are made from recycled paper products. Whilst a small amount of new material is required – as with all recycled pulp material – this is sourced from a sustainable source.

Once a macerated pulp utensil enters the sewage system there is no wastage and no negative impact to the environment.

The tiny pieces of pulp that aren't broken down completely (particulates) are removed along with the human waste and turned into useful things like organic fertilizers or as fuel for biomass reactors. Anything smaller is consumed by the friendly bacterium that is crucial to the decontaminating process.

Pulp utensils continue to be useful long after they have been macerated and flushed down the drain, either through feeding crops, powering homes or sustaining the water treatment process itself.

End of life for reusable bedpans usually involves landfill or incineration which most certainly isn't good for the environment.

DDC Dolphin is a world leader in pulp macerators and sluice/dirty utility room solutions. If your facility could benefit from our services, contact us today to learn more.

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