

Hospitals: advice on dishwashing



Infection control and looking after residents



What are the biggest challenges in hospitals when it comes to dishwashing? **Infection control and compliance.**

Dishwashers, glasswashers and utensil washers need to meet strict sanitisation standards in order to prevent cross contamination. They should record all Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) data, and these logs should be stored for 12 months, making information easy to access for infection control audits.

The warewasher should be able to be set to specific wash and rinse parameters, according to site requirements. On Winterhalter machines, the VarioPower settings allow three different wash parameters to be programmed, adjusting wash time, pressure and temperature. The chemical dosing can be adjusted, too, and our experts can advise what the dose levels should be for each site's conditions. They can also advise about water treatment, depending on the hardness of the local supply.

To protect the most vulnerable patients, machines must disinfect the pieces they are washing. This means they should reliably hit disinfection temperatures or chemical dosing levels. Winterhalter has a Thermo option on its machines, so if specific disinfection temperatures are required, Winterhalter can specify them accordingly.

Dishwashers also need to operate quietly, especially in ward kitchens, to minimise disruption to patients. All Winterhalter machines have a 'silent' mode installed as standard, to minimise noise.

It's vital that the machine can cope with the extra needs of a hospital – especially the clinical hygiene standards.

The key considerations for choosing a care home warewasher are:



Meeting infection control standards



Fitting the space available



Effortless operation



Reliability to avoid clinical risk



Affordability



Helping hospital staff get it right

The best dishwashers for hospitals are effortless to operate and look after. Winterhalter machines' control screens use easy to understand, language neutral graphics and videos, making it easy for staff to find out what to do, even on the job. For example, to help ensure that daily cleaning routines are followed, Winterhalter machines have an animation that takes them through the closing down regime. Even unskilled operators will be able to run the machines correctly, and follow hygiene protocols – and ward staff juggling multiple duties will be less pressured working with a reliable, intuitive warewasher.

Training ensures staff know and understand best practices, such as the need to report any issues immediately. Hospitals who take out a service contract with Winterhalter benefit from regular refresher training from our expert engineers – the data contained in the machines can identify areas needing improvement. Machines with connectivity, such as our Connected Wash technology, can analyse the data and advise on ways to improve efficiency and save running costs.

The combination of the machine's self-diagnostics, audible alarms and connectivity, alerting both staff on site and nominated individuals remotely, means that any issues can be escalated quickly and dealt with before they become critical.



Workflows and ergonomics

Hospitals need to ensure that central wash area workflows are carefully thought out to ensure hygienic and efficient operation – especially to segregate clean and dirty items. The workflow design can also take into account ergonomics, for example by using a design where racks are slid into place rather than lifted. Similarly, a well-engineered machine will have doors or hoods that open easily, or even automatic hood opening, and the workflow may incorporate dollies to collect and move the dishes in bulk. Machine height may be adjusted (for example, using plinths on an undercounter model) to help staff cope. Staff need to know how best to load and unload the machine, and the whole system needs to have appropriate tabling and auxiliary items. A reputable supplier such as Winterhalter will be able to offer advice on all these areas, from the best machine to the correct racks/ baskets for your ware – including those designed for, for example, melamine tableware.



Safer chemicals handling

All warewashers use cleaning chemicals, and staff need to know how to handle them safely. Integral dosing systems, which are available on all Winterhalter machines, help to minimise handling. Some chemicals have to be slightly corrosive to be effective, so training is essential. Reputable suppliers like Winterhalter will provide safe handling training as well as auxiliary products, such as funnels, to minimise exposure to corrosive chemicals.

Another solution is a non-liquid chemical, such as our Solidos system, which is available on Winterhalter's high volume MT conveyor systems. It's easy to handle and minimises manual contact.

Dosing needs to be accurate. Ask your supplier to set up the dosing according to wash items, water hardness, throughput and so on, to ensure there is no risk of incorrect dosing. Connectivity can also help with dosing. A Winterhalter machine with Connected Wash technology can be monitored remotely, and one of our expert teams can see machine parameters and adjust them live, providing immediate support without the need for an engineer visit.

The best way to ensure consistent results is to invest in a quality machine and quality chemicals. Winterhalter chemicals are formulated to work with our machines to deliver the best possible cleaning.



Managing critical hygiene risks

Preventing cross contamination and the spread of viruses is critical to protecting the most vulnerable patients. Options such as our Thermo feature thermally disinfect wash items, so they are sanitised correctly.

Specialist racks or baskets, for ware such as melamine, will mean that each piece is washed correctly and hygienically.

Training from expert suppliers will ensure staff know how to operate the machines correctly and how to handle chemicals safely.



Protecting the dishwasher

Installation needs to be carried out by an experienced specialist engineer who is familiar with the WRAS, drainage and electrical requirements. The best way to protect the warewasher over time is regular servicing under a PPM (Planned Preventative Maintenance) contract. PPM engineers will ensure that machines are HACCP compliant. A machine with connectivity, such as our Connected Wash technology, can also notify relevant stakeholders (managers, service suppliers, etc.) if machines are not reaching required wash and rinse temperatures. Connected Wash helps our engineers deliver a first time fix rate of 90%+, since it can tell the engineer what's wrong, so they can bring the right tools and spares. Multi-users can be set up for one or multiple machines across an estate, allowing access to key data.

It's important to ensure your service provider delivers a 24 hour response time. If a machine goes down and staff have to hand wash, hygiene could be compromised. Any inconsistency in wash results can trigger compliance failures – connectivity and a PPM helps to prevent this, by ensuring your machine is always operating at peak efficiency.





Plastic and melamine plates, bowls and glasses

Many hospitals use plastic and melamine tableware and glassware. The problem here is conventional dishwashing may lead to flipped crockery that needs rewashing; the plastic ware can take a long time to dry; and hygiene standards still need to be complied with. Winterhalter has developed a system for washing plastic and melamine that can be incorporated into many of its machines with minimal cost. It combines specially designed racks, which hold the ware in place, chemicals and rinse aid formulated to guarantee hygiene and speed up drying; and a bespoke software programme to manage the wash. An additional drying module can also be added to the entire range of products, which can speed up drying times even further.



Space and throughput

In the hospital's central kitchen, there will be peak times when huge volumes of ware will have to be washed, in a tight timeframe. Here a conveyor dishwasher, such as Winterhalter's MT System, is the ideal choice. In kitchens where space is limited, a compact conveyor, such as the Winterhalter CTR, is a popular choice. The CTR uses a modular design that can be configured to fit available space, for example with corner units. In common with Winterhalter's larger conveyor systems, it can be modified if requirements change – such as by adding extra modules. Another alternative is the Winterhalter PT Twinset, which links two PT passthrough machines together. The clever linking system means one person can operate both machines. It's also a flexible solution since, in quiet times, only one machine needs to be turned on, thus saving costs. Another benefit is that should disruption with one machine occur, the working PT can still be used.

For small ward kitchens, our UC undercounter machines come in a choice of four different sizes, and can be configured to suit the ward's requirements – including the Thermo disinfection option.



Heat, steam and working conditions

Dishwashers create water vapour and steam as part of the wash process – but you don't want that heat and moisture in the kitchen, especially where space is limited. A well-designed warewash area will take this into consideration, for example adding a suitable extraction system. However, that's not always possible or cost effective, especially on wards. The solution is to use dishwashers with heat exchangers, such as Winterhalter's Energy models, which recycle the waste steam and heat from the wash process and use it to heat up the incoming cold water supply. The result is little or no steam when the machine is opened, enhancing the work environment. The added bonus is that the system radically reduces energy costs



Budgets and saving running costs

Lifetime running costs of a commercial dishwasher account for around 85% of the total cost of ownership, according to The Carbon Trust. A more efficient warewasher will save on running costs. For example, Winterhalter's heat exchangers can make a huge dent in electricity consumption. We're continuing to develop technologies to reduce consumption of energy, water and chemicals. Our new EcoPilot AI software update will save most of our customers around 17% in running costs. Our latest large MT conveyor systems reduce speeds to cut consumption during quieter times. And it's not just about running costs – a quality machine will save staff time, because there's no need to rewash. Plus there is the issue of compliance: cheaper machines may well not be able to meet the high hygiene standards a hospital requires.

However, quality dishwashers command a premium price. To meet the challenge manufacturers like Winterhalter have developed a range of finance options that can help hospitals get the best machine at an affordable price. Examples include our no-deposit rental option and our 0% instalment scheme.

Our recommendations



**Ward kitchens, staff rooms,
small satellite kitchens**

**UC series with optional
Thermal Disinfection**

Ideal for low-volume, decentralised washing



**Small-medium hospital kitchens and
secondary kitchens**

**PT series with optional
Thermal Disinfection**

Designed for continuous use with fast turnaround



Medium-large hospital main kitchens

CTR or MTR Series

Suitable for hospitals serving hundreds to
thousands of meals daily.



**Large acute hospitals and
central production units**

MTF Series

The highest-capacity systems,
designed for continuous throughput
of trays, plates, and utensils