



Government
of South Australia
Department of Health

Safety Alert

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Issued by SA Department of Health, Quality and Safety Unit
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6th January 2009

A patient **Safety Alert** advises of safety matters needing **immediate attention and mandatory action** to address high risk safety problems.

We recommend you inform:

Chief Executives
General Managers
Directors of Clinical Governance
Medical Directors
Clinical Directors
Nursing Directors
Supply Managers
Clinical Risk Managers
Safety Managers

Retained Instrument – Abdominal Visceral Retractor

Background

There have been several cases of retained visceral retractors in Australia over the past few years. A visceral retractor, also known as a “Murray Cod” or “Fish”, is a device used during abdominal surgery to protect the underlying bowel during rectus sheath closure by acting as a physical barrier during closure of the abdomen. A review of retained visceral retractor incidents identified the following:

The reports involved the reusable visceral retractor
Non compliance to manufacturers guidelines
Devices not included in accountable items

Actions

Health facilities are required to:

Report to the Department of Health

1. The type of visceral retractor used e.g. reusable or disposable.
2. If the visceral retractor is included in the accountable items.
3. If the manufacturers guidelines are followed when using the product – use of artery forceps to hold and withdraw the tail section

Responses required by 23rd January 2009.

Report all events

Utilise AIMS for reporting issues concerning Abdominal visceral retractors.

Further information

Please email Safety and Quality
SABS@health.sa.gov.au



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