Teat disinfection....not just a winter sport!
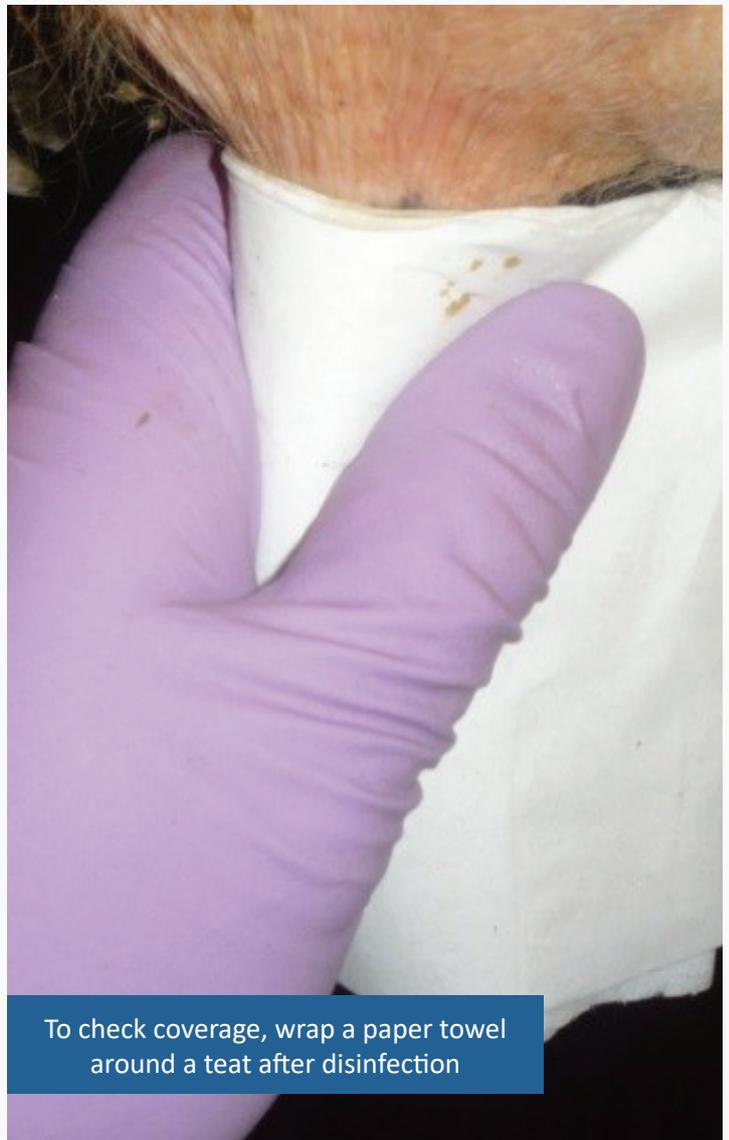
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Good teat disinfection after milking reduces new mastitis infections by 50%. It does this by killing the bacteria that are left behind after milking, and by maintaining the teat skin in good condition. The goal should be to cover all of the skin, on all of the teats, of all of the cows, all of the time! The only part of the milking machine that comes in contact with the cow is the liner, and it happens every time the cow is milked. So even in summer you need to continue disinfecting those teats.....it's not just a winter sport! You also must make sure that the whole teat surface touched by the cluster liner has been disinfected- a drop of teat disinfectant at the end of the teat is not enough!

How do you know if you're getting good coverage?

- look at teats after spraying- it can help if you use a product that's clearly visible on the teat skin after it's been sprayed on. All sides of the teat barrel should be covered.

- calculate the volume used per milking - you need to allow at least 15 mL/cow/milking. So for example, if you're milking 100 cows you should be using at least 1.5L of teat spray at each milking.

- wrap a paper towel around the barrel of the teat, then carefully remove and examine the pattern. A patchy picture indicates poor coverage of the teat, while a 'solid' block means teats have been well covered.

Remember!

If dipping, rinse out the dip cup when the teat dip gets low- don't just top it up. This reduces the risk of milk or other organic material accumulating in the dip cup. Clean it out immediately if dirt/manure drops into the cup.

To check coverage, wrap a paper towel around a teat after disinfection

A patchy picture indicated poor coverage of the teat

A 'solid' pattern means teats have been well covered

For more tips on reducing the risk of mastitis see the *CellCheck Farm Guidelines for Mastitis Control,* particularly Guidelines 7,26 & Management Note I.