It’s of the utmost importance to seek solutions in healthcare that are mindful of our environment and regard sustainability as a key element. Sustainability is defined as taking actions that meet the needs of the present, without jeopardizing the needs of future generations.

Increasing your organization’s use of reusable medical textiles is one way to Green up your operations, reduce medical waste and improve your bottom line. Consider the following points before you place your next order for disposable products.

HIGH-TECH REUSABLE SURGICAL TEXTILES
The surgical textiles manufactured in the 21st Century bear little resemblance to medical textiles 50 years ago. Today’s surgical textiles provide: Comfort, flexibility, breathability, safety, fluid barrier performance, strength and durability and low rates of particle release (linting).

MAKING THE CASE FOR REUSABLE SURGICAL GOWNS AND DRAPES
Reusable surgical gowns and drapes:
• Are designed with fluid resistant textiles,
• Protect healthcare workers from blood and bodily fluids,
• Provide comfort and allow for sterilization, and
• Several levels of protection are available.

REUSABLES REDUCE MEDICAL WASTE
Hospitals are increasingly switching from disposable to reusable surgical gowns and drapes. In making the switch, they are able to reduce both their volume of waste and high costs associated with disposal. The following are a few examples:
• According to the New England Journal of Medicine, hospital patients in the U.S. generate about 15 pounds of waste each day. Nationwide, hospitals generate approximately 6,700 tons of waste daily — at least 15% of which is considered infectious.
• 78% of hospitals designate surgical waste as infectious; 53% of surgical waste is comprised of disposable linen.
• A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association reports that about 80% of surgical drapes and gowns are disposable. It estimates that by using reusable linen products and engaging in recycling methods, hospitals can reduce surgical waste by 73% in weight and 93%* in volume.

REUSABLES INCREASE PROFITABILITY
As healthcare costs soar, hospitals have made reducing costs a critical priority. One way to reduce costs and, therefore, increase profitability is to switch to reusable surgical textile products.
• A study in The American Surgeon compared costs incurred by two similar hospitals — one used disposable gowns and the other reusable gowns. Annual expenditures were $66,000 and $25,000 respectively.
• Winter Haven Hospital, Winter Haven, Fla., converted to a reusable surgical textile program in 2001. Within five years, the cost savings were found to total $625,000.

COMFORT, QUALITY OF REUSABLES UNSURPASSED
Reusable gowns and drapes are breathable and more comfortable than their disposable counterparts. But the bottom-line facts are that hospitals can no longer ignore the cost and environmental advantages offered by using reusables.