

Environmental cleaning and disinfection in clinic settings

Quick reference guide

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential for preventing the transmission of microorganisms from contaminated objects and surfaces.

This quick reference guide is for health care workers (HCWs) and environmental services (EVS) providers in outpatient clinics and ambulatory care settings. It covers key principles for environmental cleaning and disinfection, waste and laundry management.

For more detailed information refer to [British Columbia Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Healthcare Settings and Programs](#).



Routine practices

- All HCWs and EVS performing cleaning and disinfection tasks must be knowledgeable about and follow routine practices to prevent the spread of infections, including [hand hygiene](#), [point of care risk assessment \(PCRA\)](#), personal protective equipment (PPE), laundry and waste management.



Cleaning & disinfection

NOTE: Furnishings in health care environments should be washable, intact, smooth, and tolerant of health care/hospital-grade disinfection, where possible.

- Ensure cleaning and disinfectant supplies are readily available close to the point of use.
- Use low-level health care/hospital-grade disinfectants approved by Health Canada with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and demonstrated effectiveness against common bacterial and viral agents. Access to DIN information can be found on [Health Canada's Drug Product Database](#).
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use (MIFU) regarding dilution and contact time required to be effective (i.e., to ensure pathogens have been killed).
 - When organic matter is present (e.g., blood, sputum, vomitus), it must be removed and surfaces cleaned with a detergent or cleaning agent prior to disinfection.
- Disinfectant wipes labeled as cleaner and disinfectants or with cleaning capability can also be used.
- Follow established organization procedures for cleanup and disinfection of blood and body fluid spills.
- Wear appropriate PPE.
- Clean all surfaces from clean to dirty areas, and from top to bottom to remove dirt, organic material, and debris and prepare equipment and surfaces for disinfection to be effective in killing microorganisms.
- Use firm contact and friction during cleaning to reduce the numbers of microorganisms.
- Change cleaning and disinfection cloths frequently to prevent spreading microorganisms from surface to surface.
 - Do **not** re-dip soiled/used cloths into cleaning/disinfectant solution.
 - Never use the same surface of a cloth to wipe more than one object.
 - Use a new cloth for each room.
 - Use separate cloths for clean and dirty tasks.
- For additional precautions, wear appropriate PPE, clean and disinfect all high-touch and horizontal surfaces, and medical equipment in the room.

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Frequency of cleaning & disinfection

- All surfaces touched by the patient, or surfaces used during patient care should be cleaned and disinfected between patients (e.g., work surface, exam table, and treatment chair).
- Change paper covers and clean and disinfect exam tables between patients. Paper covers do not replace indication for cleaning and disinfection.
- Floors and walls should be kept visibly clean and free of spills, dust and debris.

Type of surface	Frequency
1. Shared equipment Examples: stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, otoscopes, baby scales, tables and exam tables, treatment chairs	IN BETWEEN PATIENTS
2. Frequently/high-touched surfaces Examples: counter tops, door knobs, light switches, phones, keyboards, mice, charts, waiting room chairs, public washrooms	AT LEAST ONCE A DAY (or twice a day if required by provincial or health authority directive)
3. General cleaning of procedure/exam rooms, waiting areas/room, nursing station, floors	AT LEAST ONCE A DAY



PPE

- Wear PPE, based on PCRA, additional precautions and as specified in disinfectant Safety Data Sheets;
- Refer to [PPE donning and doffing posters](#) for step-by-step instructions.
- Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene when going between rooms and between dirty and clean tasks. Put on a new pair of gloves, if needed.
- If entering a room under airborne precautions before the recommended air clearance time has passed (e.g., 2 hours, unless otherwise specified, for suspected or confirmed measles cases), wear a fit-tested, seal-checked respirator (e.g., N95). Consult care team or IPC professional as needed.



Waste management

- Empty garbage containers daily, when 2/3 full or more frequently as needed.
- Securely close all bags for disposal. Do **not** compress bags or try to remove excess air.
- Carefully place sharps in sharps containers per usual practice. Remove and replace sharps containers when filled to fill line.
- Dispose of biomedical waste in biomedical waste bag/container as per established institutional process.
- Transport waste using clearly defined transport routes within the health care facility.
- Schedule removal of waste at designated times from designated locations when possible.
- Clean and disinfect carts used for transporting waste regularly using health care/hospital-grade low-level disinfectant.



Laundry management

- Do **not** shake dirty laundry.
- Place dirty laundry directly in a linen bag without sorting.
- Do **not** overfill bags. Do **not** compress bags or try to remove excess air.
- Contain wet laundry before placing it in a laundry bag (e.g., wrap in a dry sheet or towel).
- Consider placing a bag liner in the hamper that is either disposable (can be thrown away) or can be washed.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or carts used for transporting laundry regularly using health care/hospital-grade disinfectant.
- Launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest water settings allowed and dry items completely.
- If privacy curtains are used in the facility, remove and launder them when visibly soiled, when the patient leaves if they are on additional precautions and at least quarterly.
- Store clean laundry in designated areas.
- Maintain clear separation between clean and dirty laundry.