



General cleaning principles

This document provides general information on cleaning and disinfection principles.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can survive on surfaces for several hours to a few days depending on the surface type, the amount of virus expelled onto the surface by respiratory droplets, and environmental conditions such as the temperature and humidity. However, the virus is rapidly destroyed by cleaning and the use of a disinfectant.

Key cleaning practices

Cleaning is the physical removal of dirt, dust, blood, body fluids and germs from environmental surfaces. Surfaces must be cleaned before any disinfection process occurs, as the dirt and grime can affect how well a disinfectant works. Either a two-step process using a detergent solution first, followed by using a disinfectant solution, or a two-in-one step process using a combined detergent / disinfectant product can be used. Products can come in solutions or in pre-packaged wipes.

Detergent: is a solution that helps to manually remove dirt, dust and germs and bond it together on the cleaning cloth.

Disinfectant: is a chemical that can quickly kill germs on surfaces. Disinfectants only work effectively on clean surfaces. To effectively kill germs, the disinfectant needs to be in contact with the surface for a time. This is called contact time and this information will be found in the product instructions for use.

Gloves should be worn when undertaking cleaning and disinfection.

Disposable cleaning cloths or microfibre cloths which can be laundered can be used.

Cleaning process

When you clean, the following procedures are to be followed:

- perform hand hygiene
- put on disposable gloves
- always clean from high to low; cleanest to dirtiest
- clean using a one flow clean and wipe in an 'S' shaped pattern on all surfaces
- for cleaning products in a spray bottle, always spray the solution onto the cloth first to prevent aerosolisation of chemicals
- all cleaning products are to be clearly labelled with the name of the product and the date and time it was prepared or opened
- all surfaces need to dry to allow the detergent and disinfectant to kill the germs
- on completion of cleaning, dispose of cleaning cloths/wipes in a general waste bin
- reusable cleaning cloths are to be laundered
- remove gloves
- perform hand hygiene.

'S' shaped method of cleaning



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Version	Date	Author	Updates / Changes
V1	11 June 2021	PHEOC IPC	Initial version
V2	21 September 2021	PHEOC IPC	Inclusion contact time, simplified language.
V3	22 February 2022	SHICC IPC	Change in title to align with general cleaning principles