



# Environmental Cleaning Tip Sheet

**Cleaning** is defined as the physical removal of foreign material (e.g. dust, soil) and organic material (e.g. blood, secretions, excretions, microorganisms). Cleaning physically removes rather than kills microorganisms. It is accomplished with water, detergents and mechanical action.

**Disinfection** is the inactivation of disease-producing microorganisms. Disinfection does not destroy bacterial spores.

It is important that surfaces and equipment be cleaned thoroughly before effective disinfection can take place.

### Key Cleaning Messages:

- Follow manufacturer's instruction for proper dilution and contact time (the time a surface needs to stay wet for the disinfectant to inactivate the germs)
- Do not "double dip" cloths into bucket with cleaning solution to avoid cross-contamination
- Use friction ("elbow grease") when cleaning
- Clean from least soiled area to dirty area and from high to low surfaces (i.e. resident room before bathroom and toilet last)
- Remove gross soil (i.e. vomit, blood) before cleaning and disinfecting

### Routine Practices and Additional Precautions:

- Clean hands upon entering and exiting the resident's environment/room (clean hands in between resident bed space in a ward room)
- Clean hands before and after using PPE
- Use appropriate PPE based on isolation precautions and signage
- Do not spray cleaning solutions on surfaces. Buckets with solution and cleaning cloths are recommended.
- Gloves are task specific and single use. Do not leave room wearing gloves.

### Outbreak Specific Points:

- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces
- Use the right product for the right organism. Refer to MSDS sheet or product label (i.e. sporicidal for *C.difficile*, or product with a kill claim against non-enveloped viruses like Norovirus)
- Clean ill residents' rooms last

From [Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes \(MOHLTC, 2013\)](#) and [The Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning Educational Toolkit](#)