

Cleaning and disinfection are important in health care because they keep germs away from people and keep infections from spreading.

Cleaning vs. Disinfecting – What's the Difference?

Cleaning removes the visible dirt, dust, spills, smears, and grime, as well as some germs, from surfaces. This is accomplished by washing the surface using a cleaning product and water. Cleaning products include liquid soap, enzymatic cleaners, and detergents. High-touch surfaces should be cleaned regularly. Some examples of high-touch surfaces include tables, door handles, and keyboards.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. This is accomplished by cleaning an area with soap, water, or any additional detergent; then using an EPA-registered household disinfectant. Disinfectants are only for disinfecting after cleaning and are not substitutes for cleaning unless they are a combined detergent-disinfectant product. For effective use of the disinfecting product, follow the instructions on the label.

PPE should be worn while cleaning or disinfecting, such as wearing disposable gloves. Additional personal protective equipment might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.

Please note, these checklists are intended to be samples.

Daily Cleaning Procedures

Area	Frequency	Process	Initials
Toys	After each use and at least daily or when a toy or equipment becomes soiled with dirt or bodily fluid, including saliva. Note: Any toys that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected (eg books, stuffed animals) should be removed.	Clean and disinfect	
Exam rooms	After each patient/case At least twice per day	Clean and disinfect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• high-touch and low-touch surfaces and floors	
Waiting/Admission	Daily and as needed	Clean and disinfect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• high-touch and low-touch surfaces and floors	
Medication Preparation Area	Between uses	Clean and disinfect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• countertops• portable carts used to transport or prepare medications	
Minor operative procedure rooms	Before and after every procedure	Clean and disinfect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• any surface visibly soiled with blood or bodily fluids• high-touch surfaces in the procedure room• floors in the procedure room	

End of Day Cleaning Procedures

Area	Process	Initials
Toys	Clean and disinfect	
Exam rooms	Clean and disinfect entire floor and low touch surfaces	
Waiting/Admission	Clean and disinfect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High-touch and low-touch surfaces and floors	
Medication Preparation Area	Clean and disinfect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• countertops• portable carts used to transport or prepare medications	
Minor operative procedure rooms	Clean and disinfect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• high-touch and low-touch surfaces• handwashing sinks• scrub/sluice areas• the entire floor	

Cleaning Procedure Summaries for Spills of Blood or Body Fluids

1. Wear appropriate PPE
2. **Confine the spill** and wipe it up immediately with absorbent (paper) towels, cloths, or absorbent granules (if available) that are spread over the spill to solidify the blood or body fluid (all should then be disposed as infectious waste).
3. **Clean** (neutral detergent and water)
4. **Disinfect** using a facility-approved intermediate-level disinfectant.
5. Immediately **clean/disinfect all reusable supplies and equipment** (e.g., cleaning cloths, mops) after the spill is cleaned up.

To learn more about healthcare environmental infection prevention and control, visit cdc.gov/hai/prevent/environment

To learn more about disinfection and sterilization, visit cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/disinfection

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