

Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Topic: Environmental Controls Carpet, Textiles, and Spills

Use infection control actions to prevent germ spread from dry surfaces.

Intro: Infection prevention control actions help fight the spread of infectious illnesses. If we can identify the place where germs live and recognize the actions to take to prevent the spread, we can protect ourselves and our clients. Using infection control actions can reduce the spread of germs through dry surfaces including textiles and carpets. Infection control actions that you take can also reduce the spread of germs from wet surfaces resulting from spills. ^{1,2,4}

What is the risk? Germs that are found on the body, sent into the air, and found in body fluids (blood, mucous, stool) can often be found on dry surfaces. Many of the germs that live on dry surfaces can live for a very long time – days or even weeks.⁴ These germs can spread through direct and indirect touch from dry surfaces, including carpet, cloth furnishings, and from moisture that results from spills. ^{3,4}

Carpet and cloth furnishings¹

Germs can live on dry surfaces like carpet and cloth furnishings. Infection control actions prevent the spread of germs from dry surfaces to us and our clients.

Carpet ^{1,3,6}

- Avoid use of carpeting in high-traffic zones in patient-care areas or where spills are likely (e.g., burn therapy units, operating rooms, laboratories, and intensive care units).
- Vacuum carpeting in public areas of health-care facilities and patient-care areas regularly. Use well-maintained equipment designed to minimize dust dispersion.
- Periodically deep clean carpeting.
- Use Follow facility policies and procedures, observe the contact times, and follow cleaning instructions on the product used.^{9,10}

Upholstered furniture, drapes, curtains ^{1,3,6}

- Avoid the use of upholstered furniture and furnishings in high-risk patient-care area and areas with increased potential for body fluids or spills (e.g., pediatrics units or areas with increased risk of spills etc.).
- Maintain the surface of upholstery by repairing tears and holes.
- If upholstered furniture in a patient's room requires cleaning to remove visible soil or body fluids, move that item to a maintenance area where it can be adequately cleaned with a process appropriate for the type of upholstery and the nature of the soil.
- Use appropriate cleaning supplies based on the type of fabric you are cleaning and the facility's procedures.

Spills including blood/body fluids^{1,3,6}

- Wear appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) per facility policy.

- Clean and disinfect any spill in any patient or non-patient area immediately or as quickly as possible.
- Confine the spill and wipe it up with absorbent (paper) towels, cloths, or if available, absorbent granules that are spread over the spill to solidify the blood or bodily fluid. All should then be disposed of as infectious waste.
- Allow the disinfectant to remain wet on the surface for the required contact time as stated on the product label before wiping.
- Disinfect by using a facility-approved, intermediate-level disinfectant.
- Spot-clean blood or body substance spills promptly.
- Follow proper facility procedures for managing spills on carpet.
- If a spill occurs on carpet tiles, replace any tiles contaminated by blood and body substances.

Summary: Germs live on surfaces including carpet and textiles (furniture, curtains/drapes etc.), These germs can be there for days or weeks and spread through touch to clients. You can do infection control actions to reduce the spread of germs. ^{1,2,4}

References:

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