

IPC Topic: Cleaning and Disinfection

Intro: The definition of cleaning per CDC, “removes visible dirt, dust, spills, smears, and grime, including organic material like blood, as well as some germs, from surfaces.” Disinfection is the “act of killing pathogens.” Germs found on the body, in the air, and in stool can often be found on dry surfaces, and some can live for a long time. Hands can pick up germs from dry surfaces and move them to other surfaces and people.

What is the risk? Know where germs live to stop spread and protect clients and yourself. Germs can live on all types of surfaces and equipment. Cleaning and disinfection can help keep ourselves and our clients healthy and safe!

Highlights:

- Recognize when and where to clean and disinfect.
 - Patient/resident Rooms
 - High-touch Surfaces
 - Bed rails
 - Call lights
 - Keyboards
 - Light switches
 - Doorknobs
 - Phones
 - Toilet seats
 - Sink faucets
 - Grab bars
 - All surfaces
- Cleaning
 - Important to clean before you disinfect.
 - *Removes* visible dirt, dust, spills, smears, and grime, including organic material like blood, as well as some germs, from surfaces.
- Disinfecting
 - The process of killing germs.
 - Important to use an EPA registered product cleaner.
- What information do you need from the disinfectants label?
 - Is the product EPA-approved?
 - On which surfaces can the disinfectant be used?
 - What germs has the disinfectant been proven to kill?
 - Should the product be diluted?
 - What is the contact/dwell/wet time?
 - Do you need to wear PPE while dilution or using?
- Tips
 - Do not rush contact time for disinfection.
 - **Do follow the listed contact time.**
 - **Do not wipe.**
 - **Do not blow.**

Summary: Understanding the how, when and why's of proper disinfection will help keep you and your patient safe and healthy. Cleaning and disinfecting, requires a team approach to stop the spread of germs.

For more information on recognizing risk in therapy departments and related Project Firstline materials, see References below:

1. [Guideline for Disinfection and Sterilization in Healthcare Facilities \(2008\)](https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/disinfection/introduction.html). Infection Control. CDC.
2. [Selected EPA – Registered Disinfectants](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants). EPA.
3. [CDC's Core Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Safe Healthcare Delivery in All Settings](https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/core-practices/index.html). Infection Control. CDC.
4. [Germs Can Live on Dry Surfaces](https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/projectfirstline/Healthcare-Germs-Environment-DrySurfaces-508.pdf). Project Firstline. CDC.
5. [Inside Infection Control: Cleaning? Disinfection? What is the difference?](https://youtu.be/dluRI9OpjY). Project Firstline. CDC.
6. [Germs live in water and on wet surfaces](https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/pdf/projectfirstline/Healthcare-Germs-Environment-WaterAndWetSurfaces-508.pdf). Project Firstline. CDC.
7. [Keeping Hands Clean | CDC](#)
8. [How to Read a Disinfectant Label \(cdc.gov\)](#)