

Topic: Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

Tools and Resources

Project Firstline Video: [Episode 16: Cleaning? Disinfection? What is the difference?](#)

Project Firstline Video: [Episode 20: Why do Cleaning and Disinfection matter in Healthcare?](#)

Project Firstline Video: [Episode 22: Why does Contact Time Matter for Disinfection?](#)

Selected EPA Registered Disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants>

COVID-19 Resources for Environmental Services: https://www.ahe.org/system/files/media/file/2021/06/Project_Firstline_Covid19_EVS_Resources_2021_0.pdf

Chicago Department of Public Health: <https://www.chicagohan.org/en/web/han/hai/pfl>

Recordings from 2022 Project Firstline Webinar Series: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1en-Rg_ete_ujxoEX5mniEA816oKek_5



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Project Firstline initiative aims to provide infection prevention and control training for frontline healthcare workers by supporting their efforts to understand and confidently apply the principles necessary to protect themselves, their facility, and their community from infectious disease threats.

Environmental Cleaning Strategies

Cleaning is the process that removes visible dirt, dust, spills, and organic material like blood or body fluids from surfaces and **disinfection** is the process that kills germs, which is a crucial part of our infection control program.

For all environmental cleaning procedures, the following general strategies should be used:

- ◆ Conduct a visual preliminary site assessment to determine if there are dangers or obstacles that could pose a challenge to safe cleaning and to determine if additional personal protective equipment or supplies are needed;
- ◆ Immediately attend to body fluid spills;
- ◆ Proceed from cleaner to dirtier areas to avoid spreading dirt and germs;
- ◆ Move from high to low surfaces (top to bottom) to prevent dirt and germs from dripping or falling and contaminating already cleaned areas; and
- ◆ Follow a systematic manner to avoid missing areas.

Contact Time

Disinfectants used in healthcare are registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA has a [specific list](#) of disinfectants that are effective against the different healthcare pathogens.

Contact time is the amount of time that a disinfectant needs to sit on a surface to kill specific pathogens before being wiped away. Following the label instructions on a disinfectant is key to knowing the appropriate contact time to ensure those pathogens are killed. Contact time is important because the product your organization is using might not kill germs right away. It takes time before all of the germs are killed and something is considered truly disinfected.

When utilizing disinfection processes these are important things to consider:

- DO** follow the listed contact time to ensure that surfaces and items are properly disinfected and to keep germs from spreading.
- DO NOT** rush the process. Wait until the contact time is complete before using patient care equipment or bringing a new patient into a room.
- DO NOT** wipe a surface to dry it faster.
- DO NOT** blow on a surface to dry it faster.

It is important to keep the healthcare environment clean to stop the spread of germs.

*Please reach out to
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if you have any questions or comments.*