

COVID-19 Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools & Early Childhood Centers

What you need to know at a glance

- Cleaning an area with normal household disinfectant after someone with suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
- If an area can be kept closed and secure for 72 hours, wait until this time has passed for cleaning as the amount of virus living on surfaces will have reduced significantly by 72 hours.
- Wherever possible, wear disposable or washing-up gloves and aprons for cleaning. These should be double-bagged, then stored securely for 72 hours then thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished.
- Using a disposable cloth, first clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water. Then disinfect these surfaces with the cleaning products you normally use. Pay particular attention to frequently touched areas and surfaces, such as bathrooms, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells and door handles.
- If an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, from a person with coronavirus (COVID-19), consider using protection for the eyes, mouth and nose, as well as wearing gloves and an apron.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and after removing gloves, aprons and other protection used while cleaning.

Background

Experience of new coronaviruses (SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV) has been used to inform this guidance. The risk of infection depends on many factors, including:

- the type of surfaces contaminated

- the amount of virus shed from the individual
- the time the individual spent in the setting
- the time since the individual was last in the setting

The infection risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) following contamination of the environment decreases over time. It is not yet clear at what point there is no risk. However, studies of other viruses in the same family suggest that, in most circumstances, the risk is likely to be reduced significantly after 72 hours.

This guidance provides recommendations on the cleaning and disinfecting of schools and early childhood centers amidst the recent emergence of the COVID-19 disease. The Ministry of Health and Social Development, Environmental Health Division will update this guidance as needed and as additional information become available. These guidelines are focused on schools (private and public), childcare centers, children homes, after-care programs, etc.

Cleaning vs. Disinfecting

- Cleaning is the removal of visible dirt or particles done on a routine and continual basis. This is typically done using detergent and water.
- Disinfecting is the killing or destruction of germs (bacteria, viruses, fungi) on surfaces using physical or chemical means. There must be compliance of contact time when using a chemical disinfectant.

What to Clean and Disinfect

Surfaces - toys, changing tables, desks, knobs, chairs, counters, sinks, cots, toilets, faucets, mattresses, etc.

Linens- clothing, sheets, etc.

How to Clean and Disinfect

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should first be cleaned using a detergent (soap) and water.

- After cleaning, surfaces should be disinfected using a disinfectant.
- For disinfection, regular household solution and/or EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Be certain to use suitable disinfectant for appropriate surfaces.
 - The Environmental Health Division recommends 1/4 cups of bleach to 1 gallon of water.
 - For EPA-registered household disinfectants refer to <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfecting products.

- Do not shake dirty laundry; this minimizes the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Wash items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Clean and disinfect hampers for transporting laundry according to the guidance for surfaces above.

When to Clean and Disinfect

The frequency of cleaning and disinfecting is dependent on what is being cleaned and disinfected.

- Cribs, linens, toys, cots, mattresses should be cleaned and disinfected weekly and before use by a different child.
- Tables, desks, chairs, sinks, faucets, toilets, should be cleaned and disinfected daily (at least three times per day) or immediately if visibly soiled.
- Changing tables should be cleaned and disinfected after each child's use

Who should clean and disinfect:

Staff should be identified to perform cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

Use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE):

- Staff should wear disposable gloves when cleaning and handling garbage.
- Gloves should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- Immediately after gloves are removed, hands must be washed.

Hand Hygiene:

- Staff must clean hands frequently, including after removing gloves, after contact with an ill person, after using the bathroom, before eating or preparing food, between task and child, after blowing nose, sneezing or coughing, etc.
- Hands must be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water is not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with an alcohol content of at least 60% may be used.

Hand Hygiene- Using Soap and Water

GERMS ARE EVERYWHERE! Practicing proper hand hygiene is extremely important amidst the recent emergence of the COVID-19 disease. COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through contact with contaminated surfaces. Handwashing using soap and water is the most effective way in reducing the amount of germs on the hands. The following steps are recommended when using soap and water:

Steps to Cleaning Hands using Soap and Water:

1. Wet hands.
2. Apply Soap. Use sufficient soap to produce a good lather.

3. Scrub hands for 10-15 seconds. Be sure to clean under fingernails and between fingers.
4. Rinse hands thoroughly.
5. Dry hands using a single-use paper towel or hand dryer. Consider using the paper towel to turn off faucet and open the restroom door.

How to wash hands (should take at least 20 seconds):



1. Wet hands and arms. Use running water as hot as you can comfortably stand. It should be at least 100°F (38°C).



2. Apply soap. Apply enough to build up a good lather.



3. Scrub hands and arms vigorously. Scrub them for 10 to 15 seconds. Clean under fingernails and between fingers.



4. Rinse hands and arms thoroughly. Use running warm water.



5. Dry hands and arms. Use a single-use paper towel or hand dryer. Consider using a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the restroom door.



Hand Hygiene- Using an Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

GERMS ARE EVERYWHERE! Practicing proper hand hygiene is extremely important amidst the recent emergence of the COVID-19 disease. COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through contact with contaminated surfaces. Along with handwashing using soap and water, the use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with an alcohol content of 60% or more, is effective in reducing the amount of germs on the hands. The following steps are recommended when using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

Steps to Cleaning Hands using Hand Sanitizer:

1. Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Rub your hands together for 20 seconds. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers.
3. Keep rubbing until your hands are dry. This should take around 25-30 seconds. Do Not Wipe Hands



Adapted from Public Health England Guidance sheets