



HOMES AND SENIORS SERVICES

POLICY & PROCEDURE NUMBER: 1.8

DEPARTMENT: *Infection Control*

SUBJECT: *Guidelines for Cleaning,
Disinfection and Sterilization*

APPROVAL DATE: April 2004

REVISION DATE: March 2016; March 2017

REVIEW DATE: November 2018

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CLEANING, DISINFECTION AND STERILIZATION

Appropriate cleaning, disinfection and sterilization of resident care equipment is essential in limiting the transmission of organisms within the Elgin County homes. The reprocessing method needed for a specific item will depend on the intended use of the item, the risk of infection to the resident and the amount of soiling.

Cleaning is always essential prior to disinfection or sterilization. An item that has not been cleaned cannot be disinfected or sterilized.

Effective cleaning removes large numbers of microorganisms. Soil can shield microorganisms and protect them from the action of disinfectants/sterilants or interact with the disinfectant/sterilant to neutralize the process.

The manufacturer's directions for cleaning should be considered prior to the purchase of any piece of equipment. Products that cannot be effectively cleaned and disinfected should not be purchased.

Cleaning

Environmental cleaning and maintenance prevent the build up of soil, dust or other foreign material that can harbour pathogens and support their growth.

The aim of cleaning is to achieve a clean environment with regular and conscientious general housekeeping. Extraordinary measures do not need to be taken to disinfect the environment. Visible dust and dirt should be removed routinely with water and detergent and/or vacuuming. Duct, fan and air conditioning systems should be cleaned and maintained according to a schedule. The environment should be kept free of clutter to facilitate housekeeping.

Environmental water reservoirs have been associated with numerous infections and outbreaks. Examples include faucet aerators, showerheads, sinks, drains, floor machines, flower vase water, ice machines, water carafes and hydrotherapy baths.

The following recommendations shall be incorporated into the policies of the Elgin County Homes.



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1. An education program should be in place for housekeeping staff to assist them in understanding the effective methods of cleaning and the importance of their work.
2. Elgin County Homes will ensure policies are developed for cleaning schedules and methods. These should include the shift that is responsible.
3. Routine cleaning of environmental surfaces and noncritical resident care items should be performed according to a predetermined schedule and should be sufficient to keep surfaces clean and dust free. Horizontal surfaces that are frequently touched by the hands of health care providers and residents (e.g. call bells, equipment, knobs) require a minimum of daily cleaning. Resident bathrooms should be cleaned at least once a day, but the frequency should be assessed and may need to be increased. Curtains should be cleaned on a routine schedule and whenever there is visible soil. Walls should be cleaned as part of a regular schedule and spot-cleaned whenever visible soil is present.
4. Procedures for cleaning should use a process, which moves from the cleanest areas to those areas of highest soiling and from high areas to low areas.
5. Any dry cleaning should be done carefully with a chemically treated dry mop or vacuum cleaner (with exhaust filter) rather than a broom. A swiffer may be used to minimize the dispersal of microorganisms into the environment.
6. Ceiling tiles and walls should be inspected for signs of leakage when high dusting is being done. This may indicate a leak in plumbing or HVAC system, which requires maintenance.
7. Vacuum cleaners should be used on carpeted areas. Expelled air from the vacuum cleaners should be diffused so that it does not aerosolize dust from uncleaned surfaces.
8. During wet cleaning, cleaning solutions and the tools with which they are applied soon become contaminated. A routine should be adopted that does not redistribute microorganisms.
9. Mop heads should be laundered daily and thoroughly dried before storage.
10. Tools used for cleaning and disinfecting must be cleaned and dried between uses.



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11. Cleaning and disinfecting agents must be mixed or mechanically dispensed and used according to manufacturers' recommendations.
12. Vinyl gloves should be worn during cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
13. Elgin County Homes shall determine a schedule for cleaning and maintaining ducts, fans, and air conditioning systems. A maintenance work order generating system can schedule these services based on a predetermined timeline.

Cleaning Procedures for Common Items

Surface/object	Procedure	Special Considerations
Horizontal surfaces such as bed tables, work counters, beds, mattresses, bedrails, call bells	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thorough regular cleaning 2. Cleaning when soiled 3. Cleaning between residents after discharge 	
Walls, blinds, curtains	Should be cleaned regularly with a detergent and whenever visibly soiled	
Floors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thorough regular cleaning 2. Cleaning when soiled 3. Cleaning between residents and after discharge Damp mopping preferred.	Detergent is adequate in most areas. Blood/body fluid spills should be cleaned up with disposable cloths followed by disinfection with a low-level disinfectant.
Carpets/upholstery	Should be vacuumed regularly and shampooed whenever soiled.	
Toilets and commodes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thorough regular cleaning 2. Cleaning when soiled 3. Clean between residents and after discharge. Use a low-level disinfectant.	These may be the source of enteric pathogens such as <i>C. difficile</i> , <i>Shigella</i> .



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Disinfection and Sterilization

Disinfection is defined as the inactivation of disease-producing microorganisms. Disinfection does not destroy bacterial spores. Disinfectants are used on inanimate objects. Medical equipment/devices must be cleaned thoroughly before effective disinfection can take place. Disinfection is required when the cleaning process alone does not make the product safe for its intended use. In LTCFs there are two main methods of disinfection available: liquid chemicals and pasteurization. Regardless of the type of disinfection process chosen, it is essential that the process is used correctly. Failure to use the process correctly may result in the transmission of infections.

- **Chemical Disinfection**

The Health Protection Branch of Health Canada regulates chemical disinfectants. The label on the disinfectant must clearly state: the product name, active ingredients, intended use, the area and site of use and specific directions for use.

- **Pasteurization**

Pasteurization is a process of hot water disinfection accomplished through the use of automated pasteurizers or washer disinfectors. Pasteurization provides high-level disinfection for semi-critical items such as respiratory therapy equipment.

Equipment is exposed to water above 75°C for 30 minutes. The items must be totally immersed in water throughout the pasteurization cycle. The pasteurization cycle should be monitored to ensure that the correct temperature is being maintained for the required time frame.

Sterilization is the destruction of all forms of microbial life including bacteria, viruses, spores and fungi. Items must be cleaned thoroughly before effective sterilization can take place.

Methods of sterilization include steam, dry heat and chemicals.

Sterilization must be used for all critical devices that contact the bloodstream, non-intact mucous membranes or normally sterile body sites. The sterilization process must be validated and documented to ensure that the parameters have been met. This monitoring process includes:

- Mechanical – time and temperature graphs, charts or printouts



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- Chemical – time/temperature and/or humidity sensitive tape, strips or pellets
- Biological – spore-laden strips or vials

Each home must have policies identifying what processes are to be followed and the action to be taken if there is a failure in the process.

References:

Health Canada. *Infection Control Guidelines. Hand Washing, Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization in Health Care*. December 1998; Vol. 24S8: 15-16.

APIC Text of Infection Control and Epidemiology. APIC 2000; Vol. 1: 73-1-5

PIDAC: *Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections*. May 2012