

CLEANING UP VOMIT AND DIARRHEA AND OTHER UNPLEASANT TASKS IN NURSING HOMES AND SIMILAR SETTINGS

Staff who clean up vomit or diarrhea should use the following precautions to reduce their risk of infection



General Principles

- ✱ Anything soaked with norovirus-laden vomit and diarrhea should be carefully handled to prevent transmission to handlers by direct contact or aerosols, and the surrounding area should be decontaminated.
- ✱ Careful handling includes:
 - o using personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, and gowns)
 - o soaking up vomit and diarrhea with paper towels or other disposable cloths
 - o handling contaminated material as little as possible and with minimal agitation to reduce aerosols (don't shake soiled linen for example)
 - o removing contaminated material from the contaminated area in impervious bags
- ✱ Area decontamination includes:
 - o using freshly-made **5000 ppm (0.5%) hydrochlorite (bleach) solution** - 10 parts bleach to 100 parts water (1 1/2 cups bleach to one gallon of water) - left in place 5 minutes to ensure adequate disinfection and followed by a hot water rinse OR
 - o using another **disinfectant EPA-registered for noroviral disinfection** according to the manufacturers' instructions. See "List G: EPA's Registered Antimicrobial Products Effective Against Norovirus (Norwalk-like virus), January 1, 2009" at www.epa.gov.

Specific Situations

Cleaning specific things

Bed linens, curtains, pillows & non-disposable mop heads: place contaminated, washable objects directly into washing machines without mixing with other objects and launder with water temperature 140° -160°F; decontaminate pillows with impermeable covers with 0.5% bleach solution

Carpets and upholstery: carefully remove vomit and diarrhea; clean contaminated carpet or upholstery w/ detergent and hot water; steam clean at 158°F for 5 minutes or 212°F for 1 minute; do not vacuum

Furniture, floors, and other vertical & horizontal hard, non-porous surfaces (in the vicinity of the contaminated area): carefully remove vomit and diarrhea; clean contaminated furniture and other hard surfaces w/ detergent and hot water; decontaminate with 0.5% bleach solution.

Fixtures and fittings in toilet areas: carefully remove vomit and diarrhea; clean contaminated fixtures and fittings w/ detergent and hot water; decontaminate with 0.5% bleach solution

Cleaning up vomit in the kitchen

Work restrictions: kitchen staff must not be allowed to work if they are vomiting or have diarrhea; furlough anyone with vomiting or diarrhea for 72 hours after the vomiting and diarrhea stops

If a vomiting or diarrhea accident occurs in the kitchen:

- o carefully remove the vomit and diarrhea and decontaminate the area surrounding the accident w/ 0.5% bleach solution as described above
- o if the contaminated area is a food contact surface, decontamination must be followed by a clear-water rinse and a final wipe down with 200ppm sanitizing bleach solution

Food: destroy any exposed food, food that may have been contaminated, and food that was handled by the worker who had the accident

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These guidelines were adapted from Chadwick PR, Beards G, Brown D, et al. Management of hospital outbreaks of gastroenteritis due to small round structured viruses. *J Hosp Infect* 2000;45:1-10