

CLEANING UP VOMIT AND OTHER UNPLEASANT TASKS



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

General Principles

- ◆ Handle with care anything contaminated with vomit or diarrhea:
 - wear protective gear (gloves, masks & gowns)
 - soak up vomit & diarrhea with disposable cloths or absorbents like cat litter
 - do not shake contaminated linen & other materials
 - remove contaminated linen & other materials in impervious bags
- ◆ Clean & disinfect contaminated areas and surrounding areas:
 - remove every bit of vomit or diarrhea from all surfaces
 - clean with detergent & hot water
THEN
 - use 5000 ppm/0.5% bleach solution —1½ cups of 5.25% bleach or 1 cup of 8.25% bleach to one gallon of water— left in place for at least 5 minutes & followed by a hot water rinse; bleach solution must be freshly made every 24 hours clean with detergent & hot water
OR
 - use an EPA-registered norovirus disinfectant
(<http://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-g-epa-registered-hospital-disinfectants-effective-against-norovirus>)

Specific Situations

Cleaning specific things

Bed linens, curtains, pillows & non-disposable mop heads: do not mix contaminated materials with other materials; launder with water temperature 140° -160°F; disinfect pillows with impermeable covers with 0.5% bleach solution (see above)

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; disinfect with 0.5% bleach solution (see above)

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

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 until symptom-free for 48 hours

If a vomiting or diarrhea accident occurs in the kitchen:

- carefully remove the vomit and diarrhea and disinfect the area surrounding the accident w/ 0.5% bleach solution (see above)
- 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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Source: MacCannell T, et al. Guideline for the prevention and control of norovirus gastroenteritis outbreaks in healthcare settings. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* 2011;32:939-68