

# **CLEANING, SANITIZING, AND DISINFECTING**

## **A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Child care settings bring children together for long periods of time. This close, prolonged contact may expose children to many different disease-causing organisms (germs). Although the environment cannot be made germ-free, the harmful effects of germs can be lessened by keeping their numbers at low levels. Germs can most effectively be controlled by frequent, thorough handwashing, and cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting objects which come into contact with children. In addition, proper handling and disposal of contaminated items are necessary to prevent the spread of infections.

Since germs cannot be seen, cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting those items that do not look soiled or dirty might be overlooked. Similarly, children who do not show symptoms of illness may not be suspected of carrying or spreading germs, even though they may be as infectious as those children who do have symptoms. Proper cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting practices must be followed routinely, not only when items appear to be soiled or when children appear to be ill.

Several diseases may be spread by contact with blood and body fluids. These fluids should always be treated as if they are infectious because disease-causing germs can be present even in the absence of illness. Germs that grow on moist surfaces can also spread diseases. Water tables used for play in child care can serve as a source of contamination and their use is highly discouraged. If water tables are used, they should be individual pans.

Finally, the frequency of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting may need to be increased at the request of local or state health officials to control certain contagious diseases.

## **B. DEFINITIONS**

### **CLEANING:**



is a mechanical process (scrubbing), using soap or detergent and water, that removes dirt, debris and most germs. It also removes invisible debris that interferes with disinfection and sanitation. Disease-causing germs grow best in warm, moist debris, but they may be found even on objects that are not visibly soiled.

### **SANITIZING:**



destroys harmful germs from mouthed toys, eating utensils and food-contact surfaces with a food grade chemical or high temperature.



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**Food-Contact Surfaces:**



Anything that touches food or that is put in the mouth. This includes dishes, utensils, pans, food preparation equipment, counter tops or cutting boards where food is prepared, table tops & high chair trays where children eat, teething toys, pacifiers and anything else that touches food/drink or is put in the mouth.

**DISINFECTING:**



destroys harmful germs on non food-contact surfaces. If it is made with the same chemicals as the sanitizer, the disinfectant is usually stronger than the sanitizer and not safe for food-contact surfaces.

**C. GUIDELINES**

Use the Disinfecting and Sanitizing Quick Reference on page 13 for the following guidelines.

1. Surfaces and objects contaminated with blood, urine, vomit, or stool: clean with detergent and water and disinfect immediately. (Sanitize all food-contact surfaces.)
2. Objects handled or mouthed by young children: clean and sanitize at least daily, and when soiled. (For example: toys, furnishings, equipment, and crib rails)
3. Table tops and high chair trays where children eat: sanitize immediately before seating children for a meal.
4. Food-contact surfaces: clean and sanitize after each use (use approved dishwashing machine or 3-compartment sink method with food grade sanitizer).
5. Pacifiers and teething toys: clean and sanitize after each use like food-contact surfaces (in dishwashing machine or 3-compartment sink to sanitize). If teething toys are stored in freezer, they should be wrapped or contained so they are protected from contamination.



6. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples: clean insides of bottles, caps, and nipples with a bottle brush and soapy water. Squirt water through nipple. Sanitize by washing in dishwasher or by boiling for 5 minutes just prior to filling. Store nipples in a closed container when completely air dried. (Do not wash bottles in handwashing sinks.)

7. Thermometers: clean and sanitize after each use.



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8. Wiping rags/dishrags that are used to clean counters and other food-contact surfaces: store in a bucket of food grade sanitizer while in use. Launder at least daily.
9. Water play tables: can serve as a source of contamination and their use is greatly discouraged. If they are used, children should wash their hands thoroughly at the handwashing sink before and after play in individual water basin. The basins should be cleansed and sanitized after each use.
10. Diapering area: clean and disinfect after each diaper change and air dry.
11. Toilet-training chairs (potty-chairs) if used: empty into a toilet, clean in a utility or mop sink, disinfect after each use, and store in the bathroom. (Do not use handwashing sinks or kitchen sinks to clean potty-chairs.) Sanitary handling of potty-chairs is very difficult.
12. Bathrooms: clean and disinfect at least daily and when obviously soiled.
13. Handwashing sinks/faucets handles: clean and disinfect at least daily and when soiled.
14. Indoor surfaces where children's activities occur: clean and disinfect when soiled and at least once weekly.
15. Classroom table tops and counters that are not used for preparing or serving food: clean and disinfect daily or more often if needed.
16. Uncarpeted floors: vacuum or sweep and mop with cleaning (detergent) solution at least daily and when soiled. Follow with disinfectant solution after mopping whenever blood or body fluids are present.
17. Mops: clean thoroughly in fresh water and detergent. Soak in a disinfectant solution for 10-30 minutes after use. Wring and hang to dry.
18. Carpet: maintain carpet free from visible soil. Vacuum daily. Shampoo carpets every 6 months or more often if necessary (every 3-4 months for the infant/toddler rooms). Clean carpets when children are not present. Vacuum after cleaning. Spot clean when there is obvious body fluid soiling. (See next page)
19. Utility Gloves: If utility gloves are used for cleaning and disinfecting, clean with soap and water after each use and then dip in a disinfectant solution up to the wrist. Hang to dry.



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## **D. PROCEDURES**

### **1. Cleaning:**

**CLEAN OBJECTS AND SURFACES CONTAMINATED WITH BLOOD OR BLOODY BODY FLUIDS (STOOL, URINE, VOMIT, ETC.) IMMEDIATELY.**

a. Wear disposable gloves when:

- handling blood (nosebleeds, cuts) or items, surfaces, or clothing soiled by blood or bloody body fluids.



- you have open cuts, sores or cracked skin.
- cleaning bathrooms, diapering area, or any areas contaminated with stool, vomit or urine.

b. For spills, wipe up the area to remove blood or body fluid. Use disposable towels and discard in a plastic-lined trash can.

c. Clean objects and surfaces by scrubbing with detergent and fresh water to remove debris. Do not reuse water that has been standing in pails, basins, or sinks.

d. Rinse objects (under running water when possible).

e. Follow cleaning with disinfecting or sanitizing of the area/objects.

f. Remove gloves and discard after each use. Wash hands **IMMEDIATELY**, even if gloves have been worn. Wash thoroughly and vigorously with soap and water, under warm running water for at least 20 seconds.

### **2. DISINFECTING**

Disinfecting solution is used to disinfect hard, non food-contact surfaces. This solution is stronger than sanitizer.

A recommended disinfectant for child care settings is a solution of household bleach and water. A bleach solution is recommended because it is safe, effective, inexpensive, and readily available. If a different commercial disinfectant is used, it must be registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It also must be effective against hard-to-kill bacteria (tuberculosis), viruses (hepatitis B), and parasites (*Giardia*). Use according to manufacturer's directions.

- a. Clean with soapy water and rinse with clean water prior to disinfecting.
- b. Submerge the item or spray the area thoroughly with disinfecting solution. Wipe with a single-use paper towel **OR** if appropriate, mop with disinfecting solution.
- c. Discard used paper towels **OR** soak mop in disinfecting solution for 10-30 minutes. Wring and hang to dry.
- d. Launder rags after one use.
- e. Place cleaning materials in locked cabinet.
- f. Wash your hands.



### **3. SANITIZING**

Sanitizing solution is used to sanitize food-contact surfaces. A recommended sanitizer for child care settings is a particular concentration of a bleach and water solution. It is important to use test strips to be sure the concentration of bleach water is 50-200 parts per million (ppm). If it is less than 50 ppm it cannot kill germs. If it is more than 200 ppm, it can be dangerous. Do not use scented bleach. If a different commercial sanitizer is used, it must be EPA approved and for use on food-contact surfaces as specified on its labeling.

- a. Clean with soapy water and rinse with clear water prior to sanitizing.
- b. Submerge the item and soak for 2 minutes or spray the item if it is too large to soak.
- c. Wiping rags/dishrags used to wipe food-contact surfaces should be kept in a bucket of freshly made sanitizing solution.
- d. **DO NOT RINSE AFTER SANITIZING.**
- e. **AIR DRY COMPLETELY** (do not towel dry).

#### **Other cleaning and sanitizing methods:**

- Properly used, NSF approved dishwashers are an acceptable means of cleaning and sanitizing dishes, bottles, teething toys, etc. (National Standards for Food Service Sanitation require 180° F water in the final rinse of a mechanical dishwasher.)
- Some commercial dish machines use chemical sanitizers instead of heat.
- Boiling objects such as bottle nipples, pacifiers, combs, etc. for 5 minutes is also an effective method of sanitizing.
- Stuffed toys and fabrics can be laundered. The detergent and mechanical action do the cleaning and the heat from the hot water in the washer and the heat in the drier act as the sanitizer.



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**DISINFECTING AND SANITIZING SOLUTIONS**

**DISINFECTING SOLUTION**

Use to disinfect hard surfaces that are not food-contact surfaces:

**¼ cup bleach in 1 gallon of water**

**OR**

**1 tablespoon bleach in 1 quart of water (spray bottle)**

Disinfect non food-contact surfaces such as nap mats, diaper changing surfaces, etc. Saturate area with solution.

Dry area with paper towels.



**PREPARE SOLUTION FRESH DAILY** because it loses its ability to kill germs with time.

**SANITIZING SOLUTION**

Use to sanitize mouthed toys, eating utensils, and other food-contact surfaces:

(This solution is approximately 200 ppm.)

**1 teaspoon bleach in 1 gallon of water**

**OR**

**¼ teaspoon bleach in 1 quart of water**



**TEST STRIPS MUST BE USED TO CHECK SANITIZER CONCENTRATION.**

To sanitize mouthed toys or eating utensils: use an approved dishwasher or soak clean items for 2 minutes in a sanitizing solution.

**DO NOT** rinse. Air dry. This solution can also be used to sanitize clean kitchen surfaces.

**NOTE!** BE SURE TO LABEL CONTAINERS OF DISINFECTING AND SANITIZING SOLUTIONS.

**NOTE!** BE SURE TO CHECK SANITIZER CONCENTRATION USING AN APPROPRIATE TEST KIT.

**NOTE!** PREPARE SOLUTION FRESH DAILY because it loses its ability to kill germs with time.