

Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting Areas Contaminated with Vomit and Fecal Matter

It is not uncommon for people to experience symptoms of gastroenteritis in public places. For some germs such as Norovirus, symptoms may come on quickly with little warning causing common areas to become contaminated. In an effort to contain the spread of the organism, and prevent an outbreak, or at least limit its spread, an immediate and effective response must be undertaken.

The following steps should be taken when cleaning up areas contaminated by vomit and or feces:

- Remove the ill person from the public area and isolate where feasible
- Cordon off the area

Ensure staff are wearing disposable gloves, a procedure mask/face shield, disposable apron to protect clothing.

- Soak up excess liquid, and collect any solid materials using papers towels, and dispose of into a garbage bag and seal. Try to limit agitation to prevent the contaminants from becoming airborne.
- Clean the area with water and detergent using a cloth for this purpose only
- Rinse the area
- Apply a disinfectant for the required contact time, recommended disinfectants include:
 - A) A freshly mixed 5.25% sodium hypochlorite solution (bleach) in a 1:50 concentration --mix 1/3 cup (80ml) bleach to 1 gallon of water (4 L) allow to air dry on surfaces that are not susceptible to bleach damage
 - B) An accelerated hydrogen peroxide solution 0.5% with a contact time of 5 minutes (follow directions on the label)
- If food preparation/service areas are contaminated **dispose** of all exposed food, and clean and sanitize all dishes/utensils in the dishwasher
- Wash contaminated clothing, towels etc in hot water with detergent and dry on the hot cycle
- Furniture and carpets **that cannot be treated with a bleach disinfectant** should be washed with soap and hot water, steam cleaned with the hottest water possible, or placed out in the sun to dry
- Washrooms must have all surfaces cleaned and then disinfected as above. Pay special attention to taps and other items the sick person may have contaminated while in the washroom.
- After clean up, ensure that you dispose of or wash all contaminated items and **WASH YOUR HANDS after removing your gloves**

Reference: Adapted from information provided by the BC Centre for Disease Control and FraserHealth.ca