

Preventing the Spread of Infectious Diseases in Childcare settings Environmental Hygiene

Environmental hygiene is a vital part of good infection prevention control

Cleaning is the removal of food residues, dirt and grease using a detergent

Detergent a cleansing agent capable of breaking down oils & fats

Disinfection is a process that reduces the numbers of bacteria to a safe level

Disinfectant a chemical that will reduce the numbers of germs to a level at which they are not harmful

Sanitisers are a combination of detergent and disinfectant

Cleaning

Routine cleaning with household detergents and warm water is considered to be sufficient to reduce the number of germs in the environment to a safe level. The effectiveness of cleaning not only depends on the product used but also on the way it is applied, that is, the mechanical action of wiping or scrubbing. Cleaning is best achieved by using a general purpose detergent (soap, washing up liquid, washing powder) and warm water, clean cloths, mops and elbow grease.

All areas should be cleaned regularly as part of a written cleaning policy/rota, outlining methods and frequency of cleaning: (Refer to “Management of Infectious Disease in childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings” Resource section for a sample cleaning programme & cleaning checklist)

Thorough regular use of detergent and warm water is sufficient for most environmental cleaning situations.

Disinfection

Disinfection is a process used to reduce the number of germs to a level where they are unlikely to be a danger to health.

- The routine use of disinfectants for environmental hygiene is not recommended, as disinfectants are potentially hazardous and must be used with caution and according to the manufactures instructions.
- During outbreaks of infectious diseases the use of a disinfectant is recommended.

Generally there are two categories of chlorine based disinfectants

- Sodium Hypochlorite (Bleach) available in liquid form (examples are, Milton and Domestos).
- Sodium Dichloroisocyanurate (NaDCC) available as tablets, powders and granules (examples are, Presept, Haz-Tab, Klorosept, Acticlolor)

Use	% Hypochlorite advised	Parts per million (ppm) available chlorine advised
Environmental disinfection (walls, floors, toilets, general surfaces)	0.1	1,000 ppm
Blood Spills	1	10,000 ppm
Infant feeding utensils, catering surfaces and equipment	0.125	125 ppm

*All the above information is covered in **Management of Infectious Disease in childcare Facilities and Other Childcare Settings” Chapter 6. Environmental Hygiene.***

This is an invaluable document for all Childcare facilities. If you haven't already acquired a copy it can be downloaded at

<http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/LifeStages/Childcare/>