

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection in the School Environment

Influenza viruses including the pH1N1 (pandemic) strain can survive between 8 to 48 hours on environmental surfaces including hard toys, countertops, door knobs, hand rails, phones , computer keyboards* etc. While these viruses can be inactivated by routine cleaning with commercially available cleaning products, the use of certain disinfectants are also very effective. Disinfectants have the added benefit of inactivating other common viruses such as Norovirus, the cause of winter outbreaks of diarrhea and vomiting in many schools.

Combined with a good hand hygiene program, the following practices should be used to help reduce the risk of the spread of influenza viruses and other potential illness causing microorganisms in the school environment:

- Clean visibly soiled surfaces before disinfecting.
- Wear appropriate gloves when in contact with chemical solutions, and where specified by the manufacturer.
- Prepare solutions for cleaning and disinfection daily. It is important that proper strengths of disinfectant solutions are used. Manufacturers can generally provide test strips for this purpose.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the safe and proper application of specific cleaning and disinfecting products.



Recommendations for 3 commonly used disinfection products

Product	General Cleaning and Disinfection	Surfaces/objects which are soiled with body secretions, fluids, blood etc.
Household bleach (5 % sodium hypochlorite)	Dilute 1 part with 50 parts water, wipe surfaces and let air dry.	Clean** first using disposable towels. Dilute 1 part with 10 parts water (5000 ppm) to wipe surface and allow 10-15 minute contact time.
70 % alcohol wipes	Wipe surfaces with friction.	Not recommended. (Alcohol is inactivated by organic matter and has no residual effect).
0.5 % Accelerated hydrogen Peroxide	Dilute 1 part with 5 parts water (1000 ppm†), wipe surfaces and let air dry.	Clean** first with disposable towels. Use the product (5000 ppm) to wipe surfaces and allow 5 minute contact time.

Adapted from information provided by Ottawa Public Health

* check with your computer support/IT department before attempting to clean keyboards or other computer equipment

** clean using soap and water and disposable towels

† ppm: parts per million

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**For more information, contact the Health Unit at
1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685
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