

Cleaning and disinfecting at a glance

This guide helps you find authoritative resources so that you can establish cleaning and disinfecting protocols to reduce the risk of cross-infection.

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Disinfectants

When cleaning and disinfecting, make sure you check manufacturers' instructions to ensure you do not damage equipment or surfaces.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and European Chemicals Agency guidance on Covid-19, note the following as effective disinfectants:

- Propan-1-ol and propan-2-ol alcohol-based disinfectants in concentrations of 70-80%.¹

The ECDC also notes that, following the use of a detergent, it is also possible to use:

- 0.05% or 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution. Please note, household bleach usually has an initial concentration of 5% and you can dilute this 1:100 for a 0.05% concentration
- Ethanol (70% minimum) where sodium hypochlorite might damage surfaces.²

Routine cleaning and disinfection – during the pandemic

We would advise that you follow UK-wide infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance for healthcare settings to mitigate the risk of cross-infection³ and additional government guidance for other areas.

In the consulting room, have a clear protocol for cleaning between patient appointments – e.g. have enhanced cleaning protocols for all surfaces and equipment. For example, wipe down all surfaces following a consultation and allow additional time for this and other infection control processes. Ensure cleaning products are safe to use on the surfaces in question and have an active substance that is an effective disinfectant for Covid-19 (see above).

IPC guidance for healthcare settings also provides this helpful flow chart for [routine decontamination of reusable non-invasive patient care equipment](#).

Also, walk through the practice:

- Where possible, remove additional materials (e.g. magazines/leaflets) to aid cleaning and disinfection processes
- Minimise contact points – e.g. use contactless payments, avoid the use of pens where possible (or have staff/patients bring their pens)
- Establish regular cleaning routines for all other areas of the practice – e.g. regular cleaning of all surfaces that are touched, such as handheld devices, other equipment, door handles etc.⁴

Environment cleaning following a suspected case

Although you should **not** be seeing suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19, you will still need to plan to ensure you know how to disinfect your practice if somebody develops signs or symptoms of Covid-19 while on the premises. For example, you should have the necessary cleaning products and PPE to hand in advance as a precaution in case a member of staff develops symptoms during the day.

Health Protection Scotland (HPS) guidance covers cleaning primary care settings following a suspect case of Covid-19. [Read section five of the HPS guide here.](#)

The ECDC has produced guidance on disinfection where there has been a suspect case of Covid-19. The ECDC's table is further simplified for a UK context and reproduced below for ease of reference. [Read the full ECDC guidance.](#)

	Setting		
	Healthcare	Non-healthcare	General
Surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neutral detergent AND ▪ Virucidal disinfectant OR ▪ 0.05% sodium hypochlorite OR ▪ 70% ethanol <p style="text-align: center;">Suggested</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neutral detergent <p style="text-align: center;">Suggested</p>
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virucidal disinfectant OR ▪ 0.1% sodium hypochlorite <p style="text-align: center;">Suggested</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virucidal disinfectant OR ▪ 0.1% Sodium hypochlorite <p style="text-align: center;">Optional</p>
Textiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hot-water cycle (90°C) AND ▪ Regular laundry detergent ▪ Alternative: lower temperature cycle + bleach or other laundry products <p style="text-align: center;">Suggested</p>		NA
Cleaning equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single-use disposable OR ▪ Non-disposable disinfected with: Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite <p style="text-align: center;">Suggested</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single-use disposable OR ▪ Non-disposable disinfected with: Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite <p style="text-align: center;">Optional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single-use disposable OR ▪ Non-disposable cleaned at the end of the cleaning session <p style="text-align: center;">Suggested</p>
PPE for cleaning	Refer to HPS and PHE guidance above.		
Waste disposal	In primary care settings, double bag PPE waste and store it safely for 72 hours. Then dispose of it in regular trade waste stream. ⁵		

References

¹ 26 March 2020, ECDC, Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2; <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/disinfection-environments-covid-19>; and 23 March 2020, ECHA, Recommended requirements for the active substances Propan-1-ol and Propan-2-ol.

https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/28801697/recommended_requirements_propanol_isopropanol_en.pdf/ff333754-ea2f-f81c-ca96-874e59802806

² 26 March 2020, ECDC, Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2; <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/disinfection-environments-covid-19>;

³ UK wide Covid-19: infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance for healthcare settings, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

⁴ 11 May 2020, HM Government, Working safely during Covid-19 in shops and branches, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches#shops-5-2>

⁵ 27 March 2020, Natural Resources Wales, Regulatory decision – community healthcare waste. Regulatory decision – RBB-C19-008