

Section 7: **Principles of Cleaning and Disinfecting Environmental Surfaces**

Policy number: **7.1**

Issued: **September 2015**

Subject: **Environmental Cleaning: Overview**

Revised:

Distribution: **All FNIHB Staff**

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 High-touch environmental surfaces of the health care setting hold a greater risk of becoming contaminated with infectious agents than do public areas of non-health care organizations. Health care settings are complex environments due to the nature of activities and assessments performed, and the activities, interactions and behaviors of health care providers (HCP), clients and visitors within the health care setting. This increases the likelihood of direct and indirect contact with infectious agents and contaminated surfaces, many of which may constitute a risk to HCP, clients, and visitors in the environment.
- 1.2 Transmission of infectious agents in the environment requires the following triad:
 - 1.2.1 Presence of an **infectious agent**: e.g. bacteria, virus or germ from a HCP, client or visitor on equipment, objects and surfaces in the health care environment
 - 1.2.2 **Environment**: a means for the infectious agent to transfer from client-to-client, staff-to-client, client-to-staff, or staff-to-staff, or soiled equipment to staff or client
 - 1.2.3 **Host**: susceptible clients, health care providers and visitors
- 1.3 In the health care setting, the role of environmental cleaning is important because it reduces the number and amount of infectious agents that may be present and may also eliminate routes of transfer of infectious agents from one person/object to another, thereby reducing the risk of infection. The goal of cleaning is to keep the environment safe for clients, health care providers, and visitors.

2 POLICY

- 2.1 All health care providers working in FNIHB-OR Community Health Centres and nursing stations must adhere to the general principles of environmental cleaning in their day- to-day activities.
- 2.2 FNIHB-OR staff must adhere to the specific information and standard operating procedures outlined in the *FNIHB-OR Environmental Cleaning Procedure Manual*.

3 PROCEDURE

- 3.1 The following items are general principles of environmental cleaning that must be practiced within all health care centres and/or nursing stations. Each item is presented in more detail in an individual policy and procedure that follows within this section.
- 3.2 **Levels of Clean:** Health care facilities can be categorized into two levels for the purpose of environmental cleaning.
 - 3.2.1 **Hotel Clean:** area of the facility that is **not** involved in client care
 - 3.2.2 **Hospital Clean:** area of the facility that is involved in client care
- 3.3 **Frequency of Cleaning:** Frequency of cleaning of an object or surface depends on:
 - 3.3.1 Whether the surface is high-touch or low-touch
 - 3.3.2 Type of activity taking place in the area
 - 3.3.3 Vulnerability of HCP and clients in the area
 - 3.3.4 Probability of contamination
- 3.4 **Selection of Finishes and Surfaces:** All surfaces and finishes in the health care setting must reflect basic infection prevention and control (IPAC) principles such as:
 - 3.4.1 Ease of maintenance and repair
 - 3.4.2 Cleanable with hospital-grade disinfectants
 - 3.4.3 Smooth, seamless, nonporous and unable to support microbial viability
- 3.5 **Cleaning Agents and Disinfectants:** Cleaning and disinfecting agents used by each facility must meet specific requirements such as:
 - 3.5.1 Have a drug identification number (DIN) from Health Canada
 - 3.5.2 Be compatible with items to be cleaned and disinfected
 - 3.5.3 Used according to the manufacturers' recommendations
- 3.6 **New Equipment/Product Purchases:** All new equipment purchased for the health care facility must meet IPAC requirements for cleaning and disinfection.
 - 3.6.1 Equipment that is used to clean and disinfect must also meet these standards

4 REFERENCES

Public Health Ontario. (2010). Infection Prevention and Control Resource Manual for Residential Hospice Settings. Retrieved from <http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/mon/25001/307210.pdf>

Public Health Ontario. (2012). Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Health Care Settings. 2nd Edition. Retrieved from:
http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Best_Practices_Environmental_Cleaning_2012.pdf