

## Cleaning and Disinfecting for

# Norovirus

### What is norovirus?

Norovirus is a very contagious virus that can cause vomiting, diarrhea, fever and more.

### How do people get norovirus?

You can get norovirus by:

- Coming into contact with someone who has the virus.
- Touching a contaminated surface.
- Eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water.

### What items should you disinfect?

Disinfect items including doorknobs, faucets, sinks, toilets, commodes, bath rails, phones, counters, chairs (including backs), tables, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches, mattress covers, aprons, uniforms, linens, bedding, ice machines and over-bed tables in patient rooms.

### What disinfectant works best?

When it comes to norovirus, use chlorine bleach solution (sodium hypochlorite -NaOCl) for best results. See table at right for guidance, but also follow product label.

Although a phenolic environmental disinfectant (Lysol® or Pinesol®) may be effective, it can require 2-4 times more concentration than what's recommended — which can pose a significant health risk. Use extreme caution and read the manufacturer's warning. →

### How to Mix and Use Chlorine Bleach for Cleaning



Stainless steel, toys and items that come into contact with your mouth or food



1 tbsp of bleach in 1 gallon of water



Non-porous surfaces, tile floors, countertops, sinks and toilets



1/3 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water



Porous surfaces and wood floors



1 2/3 cups of bleach in 1 gallon of water



Apply solution on surface and leave for 10-20 minutes. Then rinse with clean water.

**It's critical to disinfect soiled items and areas to prevent the spread of norovirus!**

## **How long does chlorine bleach last when opened?**

Since open bottles of concentrated chlorine lose effectiveness, you need to change bottles every 30 days. For disinfecting, use an unopened bottle of chlorine bleach.

## **What are the health concerns with using chlorine bleach?**

### **Mixing hazards**

Use only in well-ventilated areas. Never mix chlorine bleach with acids like vinegar or ammonia like Windex®. This can create dangerous gases like chlorine gas, chloramines and ammonia gas, which can cause serious health problems.

### **Health hazards**

Chlorine bleach is corrosive and can cause severe burns and damage to mucosal tissue, skin and eyes. Inhaling bleach fumes can damage your upper and lower respiratory tract.

Note: Don't apply bleach with a spray bottle.

## **What personal protective equipment should you wear?**

When handling disinfectants, be sure to protect yourself.

- Use disposable gloves, masks, eye protection or face shields, and a gown or protective clothing.
- For environmental cleaning using a more concentrated disinfectant, you'll need a heavier duty glove than a simple non-sterile latex/vinyl glove.

**Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after cleaning. Hand sanitizers may not be effective against norovirus.**

## **How should you clean affected areas and items?**

For cleaning large spills of vomit or diarrhea, follow this two-step process:

1. Use a double layer of absorbent material to clean up vomit or diarrhea and then discard in a plastic bag to minimize aerosols that can help the virus spread.
2. Disinfect the area and objects around the vomit and diarrhea using an environmental disinfectant (multiple applications may be required).

## **Use the right dilution depending on the surface or item.**

### **Hard surfaces**

- Disinfect with bleach solution. Rinse with water if cleaning a food preparation area.

### **Carpet/upholstered furniture**

- Clean as in step 1 above. Since bleach may discolor carpet or furniture, steam cleaning may be preferred. Steam clean (heat inactivation) 158°F for 5 minutes or 212°F for 1 minute for complete inactivation.

### **Linens/clothing/textiles**

- Carefully remove vomit or diarrhea to minimize aerosols. Keep contaminated and uncontaminated clothes separated.
- Wash items in a pre-wash cycle, then use a regular wash cycle with detergent. Dry at a high temperature greater than 170°F.

### **Surfaces corrodible/damageable by bleach**

- Use EPA-registered phenolic solutions (concentrated Lysol® or concentrated Pinesol®) mixed at 2-4 times the manufacturer's recommended concentration.