

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Information Brief for Parents and Caregivers: HOUSE AND TOY CLEANING

1. If I or my family members are sick with COVID-19, how can I clean my home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to other members of the household?

Health Canada has issued recommendation on how to clean your house effectively in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to other family members and children.

Follow these steps to prevent the virus from contaminating your house and spreading to others:

- Place used face masks, gloves and other contaminated items which you or a family member wore in a *lined container* (preferably with plastic bag and a lid), secure the contents and dispose of them with other household waste.
- Place laundry or/and clothes that were worn by a person infected with COVID-19 into a container with a *plastic liner/bag* and **do not shake**. Wash with regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C), and dry well. Clothing and linens belonging to the infected person can be washed with other laundry.
- At least **once a day** clean and disinfect surfaces that household members touch often, such as:
 - *toilets*
 - *laundry containers*
 - *bedside tables*
 - *doorknobs*
 - *phones*
 - *television or other remote-control devices*
 - *Toys (see cleaning instructions below)*
- If the surface is visibly dirty, use soap and water first to clean it, then disinfect.
- Use only approved hard-surface disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms the disinfectant product is approved and safe for use in Canada. The list of products can be found on [Health Canada Website: Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\): List of hard-surface disinfectants.](#)
- High-touch electronic devices (e.g., keyboards, touch screens, remote controls) should be disinfected with **70% alcohol solution** **lightly applied to single-use gauze, paper towel or a cloth** (alcohol prep wipes can be used as well) **at least daily**. After the surface is wiped, leave the area for 10 minutes to dry.
- Use of vinegar or/and natural cleaners are not recommended. If approved hard-surface disinfectants are not available, a diluted **bleach solution** can be prepared by following the instructions on the label, or in a ratio of:
 - *1 teaspoon (5 mL) per cup (250 mL) or*
 - *4 teaspoons (20 mL) per 1 litre (1000 mL)*

2. How can I clean my child's toys during COVID-19 Pandemic?

The following guidelines apply to toy cleaning when a child is sick with COVID-19.

If you have multiple children in the home:

- Attempt your best to disinfect toys if used by a sick child before giving them to a child with no COVID-19 infection.
- If the toys cannot be disinfected (i.e., books, puzzles, magazines), they should not be shared between a child who is sick with COVID-19 and a child who does not have COVID-19. Books, puzzles, and magazines that were touched by a child with COVID-19 can be put away for 3-4 days and then re-used.

When a child is sick with COVID-19, toys should be cleaned **daily**. Follow these steps to ensure that safe cleaning practices are used:

- Clean toys with soap and water (especially if visibly dirty).
- Disinfect toys with:
 - *A dishwasher/cart washer cycle (must reach 82°C,) or*
 - *70% alcohol solution for 10 minutes (70% alcohol solution can be applied to single-use gauze or a paper towel to wipe down the toy surface), or*
 - *Bleach solution (2 tablespoons/15 ml of bleach in 3 litres of water)*
- Rinse thoroughly after disinfection.
- Air-dry prior to storage.

3. If I am sick with COVID-19, but must touch my child's toys, clothing, linens and environment, how can I do it in a safe way?

If a parent or a caregiver is sick with COVID-19, they should always wash their hands before and after touching child's items and toys and wear a mask. For more information on how to care for a family member during COVID-19 pandemic, please read [Information Brief for Parents: Caring for Your Family Member and Child/Infant with COVID-19 Infection](#).

4. Should I wear gloves when cleaning my house and touching items (i.e. masks, clothing, dishes, etc.) and linens that were used by family members with COVID-19 infection?

Health Canada recommends wearing gloves when touching items, clothes or linens used by a person with COVID-19. If you wear gloves, they should be removed and safely discarded (refer to video link below) after cleaning is done, they **should not** be reused or disinfected, and proper hand washing or sanitization should be done before putting gloves on and after removing gloves.

Please remember, gloves do not replace hand hygiene! Tips on how to properly wash or sanitize hands can be found on [Public Health Agency of Canada: Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands](#).

Instruction on how to safely remove and discard gloves can be found here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATU383lIfT8>

If you have more questions about infection prevention and control in your home during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact: Olga Bondar, Health Promotion Consultant at o.bondar@healthnexus.ca.

References:

UNICEF: *Cleaning and hygiene tips to help keep the COVID-19 virus out of your home.*

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/cleaning-and-hygiene-tips-help-keep-coronavirus-covid-19-out-your-home>

Health Canada. *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How to care for a person with COVID-19 at home – Advice for caregivers.*

<https://bit.ly/2XixtuL>

Public Health Agency of Canada: *Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 – Wash your Hands.*

<https://bit.ly/39Xf4GC>

Public Health Ontario. *Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Health Care Settings, 3rd Edition.*

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/bp-environmental-cleaning.pdf>

The New England Journal of Medicine. *Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1.* DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2004973

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973>

BC Centre for Disease Control: *Cleaning and Disinfection.*

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/cleaning-and-disinfecting>