

Why Clean and Sanitize or Disinfect?



Many viruses and bacteria can be found in child care environments.

Some of these viruses and bacteria can cause disease. Proper cleaning and sanitizing or disinfecting of surfaces is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.



The chart on the next page tells how often items should be cleaned and whether they should be sanitized or disinfected.

Cleaning gets rid of the dirt you can see!

Always clean surfaces first. Surfaces in child care facilities become soiled with dirt, grease from foods, oils from hands, art materials, food debris, mucus, and germs. A surface must be cleaned and rinsed before a sanitizing solution can effectively kill germs.

Sanitizing and disinfecting get rid of the germs you can't see!

Sanitize and disinfect cleaned surfaces to kill any germs that may be present, but can't be seen.

Using a Dishwasher

For smaller items, such as dishes and many toys, a dishwasher can do the cleaning and sanitizing jobs for you. The dishwashing liquid will do the cleaning. Make sure the dishwasher has a "sani-cycle" or is set to heat dry. The heat will kill the remaining germs on the washed items.



How Often Do I Clean It?

Clean and rinse all areas before sanitizing or disinfecting. Frequencies below are a guideline and more frequent cleaning may be needed. **Clean/Rinse = C; Sanitize = S; Disinfect = D**

Item or Area	Before Each Use	After Each Use	Daily	Weekly
Eating tables	C, S	C, S		
Food prep areas	C, S	C, S		
High chair trays	C, S	C, S		
Dishes/utensils		C, S		
Mouthed toys		C, S		
Mats or cots		C, S		
Changing table		C, D		
Sick child areas		C, D		
Sinks			C, D	
Toys (depends on use)			C, S	C, S
Toilets			C, D	
Bathrooms			C, D	
Doorknobs			C, D	
Garbage cans				C, D
Cribs				C, S

Universal Precautions

Whenever you are dealing with blood or body fluids, follow the universal precautions learned during bloodborne pathogens training. For disinfecting areas contaminated with blood or body fluids, use a 1:10 dilution of bleach, which is 1 1/2 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water. There are also disinfectants specifically designed to work on blood.

Call the Snohomish Health District Communicable Disease Outreach Program if you have additional questions about cleaning or sanitizing. We can also help write policies and provide handouts to share with parents.



Cleaning & Sanitizing

in child care settings

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Cleaning with Soap & Water

Simple soap and water cleans surfaces quite effectively. In a small container or a spray bottle, use a small amount (a squirt or two) of liquid soap or detergent (such as dish detergent or castile soap) and mix with water. Make sure that the soap you choose to use is compatible with the sanitizing solution.

- 1) Use the soap solution to clean surfaces, such as tables with food debris or greasy fingerprints, toys with saliva on them, or soiled diaper changing tables.
- 2) Scrub and wipe with a cloth or paper towel.
- 3) Rinse off the surface with water or wipe with a wet cloth or paper towel. Make sure there is no soap residue left on the surface after you are finished before applying a sanitizer. Otherwise the sanitizer may combine with the soap and not work properly.

Cleaning with Other Products

There are other products that can be used for cleaning aside from soap and water. Check the product label to make sure that it states that it is a "**CLEANER.**"

Read the entire label. If you choose to use a product other than soap and water, follow the label directions exactly, including any rinsing steps, contact time, or protective personal equipment (such as gloves or goggles). Make sure the product will work for the child care. You may want to use soap and water most of the time, and do a deeper cleaning at the end of the week with a stronger product.



Sanitizing/Disinfecting with Bleach

Bleach is sodium hypochlorite. Two different concentrations of bleach water are needed for killing germs in a child care environment.

- A general purpose **sanitizing solution** should be used on tables, counters, food prep areas, toys, cribs, nap mats, and other surfaces that may come in contact with food or children's mouths. This solution should be between 50 and 200 parts per million (ppm).
- A stronger **disinfecting solution** (between 800 and 2400 ppm) is needed for diaper changing stations, potty chairs, toilets, and bathrooms.

To make the bleach water solutions, add the following amounts of 6% chlorine bleach to 1 quart of cool water:

General purpose: $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon 6% bleach
Diaper area: 1 - 3 Tablespoons 6% bleach

Bleach will naturally evaporate over time, making the solution weaker. To ensure that the concentration of bleach is adequate to kill germs, *mix the solution daily.*

Label spray bottles with the contents, the concentration of the bleach water, and the date the solution was prepared.

- 1) Spray a bleach solution onto surfaces that have no visible soil and have been cleaned.
- 2) Allow the bleach water to remain on the surface for 2 minutes.
- 3) Wipe dry with a clean paper towel or allow to air dry.

Toys and dishes may be dipped into a bleach water solution for 2 minutes and then allowed to air dry (Use general purpose concentration).

Type of Bleach

Use either 5.25% (regular) or 6.0% (ultra) bleach. **Other concentrations (2.75% or 8.25%) need different recipes.** Make sure that the bleach contains no scents or surfactants. Never mix bleach with any other chemical, especially cleaning products containing ammonia, as harmful fumes may result.

Making in Larger Quantity

If it is more convenient, bleach water may be mixed in a 1 gallon container to make a larger volume.

In 1 gallon of water add:
General purpose: 1 tsp - 1 Tbsp 6% bleach
Diaper area: $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup 6% bleach

If the 1 gallon container has a tight-fitting lid and is labeled with the date it was made, this solution can be kept and used for up to 1 week.

Using Test Strips

Many chemical companies sell test strips that can be used to check the concentration of bleach water solutions. It is most important to check the general purpose sanitizer. If it is too weak it won't be effective. If it is too strong, it could leave a residue. You can check on-line by looking up "chlorine test strips" or contact a restaurant or janitorial supply company. Make sure you purchase strips that will measure between 0 and 200 parts per million (ppm).

Avoid Sponges – The Germ Motels

Avoid using sponges for cleaning or sanitizing. Sponges provide a moist environment full of debris in which bacteria can grow. It is better to use cloths which can be washed daily or paper towels.



Other Sanitizers or Disinfectants

A simple walk down the chemical aisle at the local grocery store will show just how many other sanitizing and disinfecting products there are on the market. As an active ingredient, they may use chlorine, quaternary ammonia, phenol, alcohol, or pine oil. Not all products are acceptable for use in child care environments or on all child care surfaces.



If you choose not to use bleach, look for a product with these qualities:

- EPA registration number on container
- Signal word of "Caution" or "Warning" (don't use products that say "Danger")
- States it is safe for use on food contact surfaces (note: some may require rinsing); child cares should use a product approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use on food contact surfaces
- Compatible with your cleaning product
- Acceptable contact time for your needs (note: some require 10 minutes)
- Odor not too strong (note: strong odors can be irritating to children's developing lungs)

When in doubt, call the manufacturer or ask your licenser, DEL health specialist, or health consultant. In Snohomish County, call the Communicable Disease Outreach Program for advice.



Any product other than bleach/water must be approved by the Department of Early Learning Health Specialist prior to use.

Always get a copy of the MSDS sheet for the product from the manufacturer and read the entire document. Follow all label instructions exactly and keep a copy of the label!