

## **Guideline for disinfecting your home prior to planned home birth**

**In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19 we are asking all clients planning a home birth to clean and disinfect surfaces in their homes to reduce the risk of potential COVID-19 viral transmissions.**

**Your midwife may wear PPE (personal protective equipment) that includes a face mask, goggles, gloves and gown to further reduce the risk of viral transmissions.**

**What is COVID-19?** COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new type of Coronavirus. COVID-19 can present as an acute respiratory illness in humans. Common symptoms of COVID-19 include having a cough, shortness of breath and a temperature.

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. If surfaces are dirty, clean them using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. To disinfect, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. The following link provides a list of approved disinfectants.

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

### **Examples of cleaning products to use to clean and disinfect your home:**

- regular household cleaners
- diluted bleach prepared in accordance with the instructions on the label, or in a ratio of 1 teaspoon (5 mL) per cup (250 mL) OR 4 teaspoons (20 mL) per litre (1000mL). This assumes bleach is 5 % sodium hypochlorite, to give a 0.1 % sodium hypochlorite solution.
- hydrogen peroxide or oxygen bleach which is made of water and hydrogen peroxide. It breaks down into oxygen and water and is kinder to the environment (and many surfaces, fabrics and your hands) than chlorine bleach.

### **How to apply hydrogen peroxide**

- Always clean before you disinfect! Soil and grease interfere with any disinfectant's germ-killing abilities.

- Put full strength hydrogen peroxide into a spray bottle or add to a clean rag. For most applications, hydrogen peroxide can be used at a three to five per cent concentration. That's how it's sold in the dark bottles at your pharmacy. Oxygen bleach, found in two- to four-litre jugs in the laundry or cleaners aisle is typically five per cent.
- Allow a "dwell time": Health Canada recommends five minutes for contact time on a surface to kill bacteria, fungi and viruses in the home.
- No need to rinse or wipe it off because it decomposes into oxygen and water. That makes it a great option when you need to squirt hard-to-reach places.
- Disinfect high-touch areas such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, phones, remote controls, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks.
- Follow product instructions on labels for laundry, stain removal and other household uses.
- Gloves are recommended.

**Note:** Store it in a dark bottle or keep your spray bottle out of direct sunlight. Hydrogen peroxide is light-sensitive and its potency is reduced if not stored properly.

- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. wear gloves, use in well-ventilated areas, allow enough contact time for disinfectants to kill germs based on the product being used).
- Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after removing gloves.
- Use damp cleaning methods such as damp clean cloths, and/or a wet mop. Do not dust or sweep which can distribute virus droplets into the air.
- Contaminated disposable cleaning items (e.g. mop heads, cloths) should be placed in a lined garbage bin before disposing of them with regular waste.
- Reusable cleaning items can be washed using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C). Clean and disinfect surfaces that people touch often.
- In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned and disinfected more often, as well as when visibly dirty.
- Shared spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms should also be cleaned more often.

No evidence to suggest that garbage waste needs any additional disinfection.

### **How to Clean and Disinfect Surfaces:**

#### Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
  - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method and contact time. Ensure proper ventilation during and after application.
  - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface or another EPA approved disinfectant.
  - Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
  - Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
  - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted (see directions to dilute above).

#### Soft (Porous) Surfaces

- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
  - If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry items completely.

#### Electronics

- For electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines, remove visible contamination if present.
  - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
  - Consider using wipeable covers for electronics.
  - If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

#### Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

- In order to minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

**Resources:**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html>

<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/8ecd-General-Infection-Prevention-and-Control-Practice-and-Disinfection-Guidance-for-Commercial-or-Residential-Buildings.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

<https://davidsuzuki.org/queen-of-green/non-toxic-disinfecting/>

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>