



Episode 11: Best Practice Cleaning and Disinfection

The role of the environment

Studies have shown that the environment can act as a reservoir in healthcare settings. Pathogens can live on surfaces for days, weeks and even months. Unfortunately, data has also shown that cleaning and disinfection of patient rooms, operating rooms and shared patient equipment is suboptimal. Previous studies have demonstrated that less than 50 percent of patient room surfaces and less than 25 percent of operating room surfaces are properly cleaned and disinfected during terminal cleaning. It has been demonstrated that a patient entering a room that was previously occupied by a colonized or infected patient has significantly higher odds of contracting that illness.

Challenges

There are many challenges in cleaning and disinfection. Staff members are faced with time pressure, performance of products and other circumstances which may impact the ability to do their job properly. Having an approach to cleaning and disinfection helps assess and address these challenges.

Process Development And Optimization

The first piece is to evaluate current practices and understand challenges and objectives. Look at ways to optimize productivity, consistent and sustainable practices and overall safety and satisfaction. Try to incorporate industry best practices and programs that can be adapted to the facility needs.

Selection Of Appropriate Cleaning Methods And Products

Integration of safe and effective products and tools will help deliver better outcomes. It is important to integrate products tools and equipment that will help achieve improved results and operational efficiency. There are many factors in each of these and they all play a role in optimization.

Customized Training Programs and Materials

Training and tools are very important to facilitate best practice adoption. There are support tools that can also help as aids to help with the workflow and procedures and bring these to life for the team, based upon the individual facility needs.



Validate Cleaning Effectiveness Through Customized Auditing System

Consider a program for objective validation to ensure surfaces have been cleaned and disinfected. Having a program to measure, analyze, activate and improve will help build the continuum of continuous improvement.

Train!

As you go through your journey it is important to Work with your manufacturers and cleaning team to identify, document and implement best practices including:

- Areas to clean
- Order to clean / workflow
- Which cleaners and disinfectants to use
- What PPE is required
- Best and most accurate dosing and dispensing
- What concentration would be used (and verified)
- What contact times are recommended for disinfectants
- How often to change cleaning cloths/mop heads
- How important their job is!!!

Know where to clean and key tips:

- Clean housekeeping surfaces (e.g., floors, tabletops) on a regular basis, when spills occur, and when these surfaces are visibly soiled
- Disinfect (or clean) environmental surfaces on a regular basis (e.g., daily, 3x per week) and when surfaces are visibly soiled
- Follow manufacturers' instructions for proper use of disinfecting (or detergent) products – such as recommended use-dilution, material compatibility, storage, shelf-life, and safe use and disposal
- Clean walls, blinds, cubicle and window curtains in areas when these surfaces are visibly contaminated or soiled
- Prepare disinfecting (or detergent) solutions as needed and replace with fresh solution frequently

Best Practices - Disinfection

- Use and EPA-registered disinfectant.
- Clean surfaces if visibly soiled
- Disinfect and ensure that the surface is visibly wet for the contact time on the label
- No double dipping
- Change mop water every 2-3 rooms or if visibly soiled

Cleaning Practices

- Disinfect surfaces from clean areas to dirty areas. For example, restrooms being one of the highly contaminated areas should be cleaned last.
- Clean and disinfect in one direction (clockwise or counterclockwise)
- Disinfect surfaces from high areas to low areas so that any dirt or dust that may contain germs dislodged from above are removed when you clean the lower surfaces.



- Disinfect last after other activities (including emptying trash, removing visible soil and vacuuming) are complete, so that any potentially contaminated dirt and dust don't re-contaminate already disinfected surfaces.
- Do not place cleaning cloth back into the disinfectant solution after using it to wipe a surface – No Double Dipping!!

There Are Steps To Consider When Illness Levels Rise

Increase the frequency of high-touch surface disinfection to two to three times a day.

Do this in addition to your daily cleaning and disinfection protocol.

Place disinfecting wipes in common areas and encourage employees to wipe frequently touched surfaces.

Stock up on extra supplies, such as cleaning and disinfecting products, soap and hand sanitizer.

Key Takeaways

Take the time to clean properly.

Train the staff on the importance of their role and how to do it effectively.

Make sure the right tools are in place with products, tools and equipment

Measure so what is respected is inspected and ensure that you know where improvements can be made.