

# CLEANING UP VOMIT AND OTHER UNPLEASANT TASKS



Staff who clean up vomit and diarrhea should use the following precautions to reduce their risk of infection

## General Principles

- ◆ Handle with care anything contaminated with vomit or diarrhea:
  - wear protective gear (gloves, masks & gowns)
  - soak up vomit & diarrhea with disposable cloths or absorbents like cat litter
  - do not shake contaminated linen & other materials
  - remove contaminated linen & other materials in impervious bags
  
- ◆ Clean & disinfect contaminated areas and surrounding areas:
  - remove every bit of vomit or diarrhea from all surfaces
  - clean with detergent & hot water  
*THEN*
  - use 5000 ppm/0.5% bleach solution —1½ cups of 5.25% bleach or 1 cup of 8.25% bleach to one gallon of water— left in place for at least 5 minutes & followed by a hot water rinse; bleach solution must be freshly made every 24 hours clean with detergent & hot water  
*OR*
  - use an EPA-registered norovirus disinfectant ([http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/list\\_g\\_norovirus.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/list_g_norovirus.pdf))

## Specific Situations

Cleaning specific things	Cleaning up vomit in the kitchen
<p><b>Bed linens, curtains, pillows &amp; non-disposable mop heads:</b> do not mix contaminated materials with other materials; launder with water temperature 140° -160°F; disinfect pillows with impermeable covers with 0.5% bleach solution (see above)</p> <p><b>Carpets and upholstery:</b> carefully remove vomit and diarrhea; clean contaminated carpet or upholstery w/ detergent and hot water; steam clean at 158°F for 5 minutes or 212°F for 1 minute; <i>do not vacuum</i></p> <p><b>Furniture, floors, and other vertical &amp; horizontal hard, non-porous surfaces (in the vicinity of the contaminated area):</b> carefully remove vomit and diarrhea; clean contaminated furniture and other hard surfaces w/ detergent and hot water; disinfect with 0.5% bleach solution (see above)</p> <p><b>Fixtures and fittings in toilet areas:</b> carefully remove vomit and diarrhea; clean contaminated fixtures and fittings w/ detergent and hot water; disinfect with 0.5% bleach solution (see above)</p>	<p><b>Work restrictions:</b> kitchen staff must not be allowed to work if they are vomiting or have diarrhea; furlough anyone with vomiting or diarrhea until symptom-free for 48 hours</p> <p><b>If a vomiting or diarrhea accident occurs in the kitchen:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ carefully remove the vomit and diarrhea and disinfect the area surrounding the accident w/ 0.5% bleach solution (see above)</li><li>○ if the contaminated area is a food contact surface, decontamination must be followed by a clear-water rinse and a final wipe down with 200ppm sanitizing bleach solution</li></ul> <p><b>Food:</b> destroy any exposed food, food that may have been contaminated, and food that was handled by the worker who had the accident</p>

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Source: MacCannell T, et al. Guideline for the prevention and control of norovirus gastroenteritis outbreaks in healthcare settings. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* 2011;32:939–68