

## **Interim Guidelines for Disinfection and Environmental Cleaning in Outpatient Clinics**

*Effective date: 10 May, 2020 until further notice.*

### **Introduction**

Effective infection prevention and control is central to providing high quality health care for all patients and a safe work environment for those that work in the healthcare setting. In line with precautionary measures taken worldwide and across the UAE in relation to COVID-19, healthcare operators are required to implement good environmental cleaning and disinfection practices. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is an important measure to prevent COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in healthcare settings.

### **Purpose**

- To provide minimum standards for disinfection and environmental cleaning in outpatient clinics and other clinical support and medical facilities in Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC).
- To protect staff and patients from spread of infection and ensure safe work place free of infections.
- To ensure business continuity.

### **Applicability**

These interim guidelines are applicable to all outpatient clinics within Dubai Healthcare City including areas where both consultation and invasive and non-invasive procedures are undertaken.

## **Guidelines**

- All healthcare operators within DHCC are required to have a signed contract with an environmental cleaning company approved by Dubai Municipality (DM) for sterilisation and disinfection services. Refer to DM list of approved companies [here](#) and [DHCA Infection Control and Preparedness Plan for COVID-19](#).
- Disinfection must be done regularly and on a weekly basis. Service reports shall be kept for inspection purposes.
- Healthcare operators shall perform intensive disinfection immediately following the below cases:
  - Cared for a patient known as confirmed case of COVID-19.
  - Has an employee reported as confirmed case of COVID-19.
- All healthcare operators within DHCC are required to have their own daily general cleaning and maintain a site-specific cleaning schedule which is signed off when the cleaning task has been completed.
- All surfaces, that are considered 'high touch surfaces' (eg. telephone, bedside table, over-bed table, chair arms, call bell cords or buttons, door handles, light switches, bedrails, handwashing sink, bathroom sink, toilet and toilet handles, grab bars) shall be cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals (a minimum of three times daily) and when visibly soiled.
- These surfaces shall be cleaned with chemical disinfectants that are EPA-registered quaternary ammonium based products (regardless of the brand name) and allowed to air dry.
- Bleach can be used as a disinfectant for cleaning and disinfection (dilute 1-part bleach in 49 parts water, 1,000 ppm or according to manufacturer's instructions). Bleach solutions should be prepared fresh. Leaving the bleach solution for a contact time of at least 10 minutes is recommended. Alcohol (e.g. isopropyl 70% or ethyl alcohol 70%) can be used for surfaces, where the use of bleach is not suitable.

- Wipe down all accessible surfaces of walls as well as blinds with disinfectant or bleach solution. Remove curtains/ fabrics/ quilts for washing, preferably using the hot water cycle. For hot-water laundry cycles, wash with detergent or disinfectant in water at 70°C for at least 25 minutes.
- The flow of cleaning should be from areas which are considered relatively clean to dirty. Areas/elements which are low touch or lightly soiled should be cleaned before areas/elements which are considered high touch or heavily soiled.
- Ensure that environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly.
- Maintain minimum 20 minutes between appointments in a manner that guarantees sufficient time to disinfect all surfaces inside the examination room before the next patient arrives.
- Clean housekeeping surfaces (e.g., floors, table tops) on a regular basis, when spills occur, and when these surfaces are visibly soiled.
- Follow manufacturers' instructions for proper use of cleaning chemical and disinfecting (or detergent) products — such as recommended use-dilution, material compatibility, storage, shelf-life, and safe use and disposal.
- All cleaning equipment used in healthcare facilities shall be fit for purpose, cleaned and stored dry between use, well maintained and used appropriately
- Discard cleaning equipment made of cloths and absorbent materials, e.g. mop head and wiping cloths, into biohazard bags after cleaning and disinfecting each area. Wear a new pair of gloves and fasten the double-bagged biohazard bag with a cable tie.
- If equipment needs to be shared among patients, clean, autoclave or disinfect it with ethyl alcohol 70% between use for each patient accordingly and as appropriate for the type of equipment.
- Healthcare operators are encouraged to develop and implement systems to ensure all staff are correctly trained in cleaning techniques, cleaning materials and chemicals, proper application of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and infection prevention and control.

- Provide (PPE) for staff.
- Healthcare operators must maintain copy of all material safety data sheets (MSDS) for chemicals used on the premises.

#### Follow good hygiene practices:

- Hand hygiene: Frequently wash hands or use alcohol-based (at least 70% alcohol) hand sanitiser when soap and water are not available
- Physical distancing: Stay 2 meters away from others.
- Cough etiquette should be applied as a standard infection control precaution at all times.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth

#### Waste and linen:

When handling waste, healthcare facilities shall:

- Apply standard precautions to protect against exposure to blood and body fluids during handling of waste.
- Ensure waste is contained in an appropriate receptacle (i.e. identified by colour and label) and disposed of according to the facility waste management plan.
- Ensure healthcare workers are trained in the correct procedures for waste handling.

All used linens should be handled with care to avoid dispersal of micro-organisms into the environment and to avoid contact with staff clothing.

The following principles apply for linen used throughout the healthcare facility (i.e. irrespective of whether transmission-based precautions apply or not):

- Appropriate PPE must be worn.
- Used linens are 'bagged' at the location of use and placed directly into an appropriate laundry receptacle (i.e. used linen should never be placed on the floor).

- Used linen must not be rinsed or sorted in patient-care areas.
- Linen heavily soiled with blood and/or body fluids should be placed into leak-proof laundry bags for safe transport.
- Hand hygiene is performed following handling of used linens.
- Clean and dirty utility areas must be separated.
- Healthcare facilities should have documented policies on the collection, transport and storage of waste and linen.

### Definitions

**Disinfection:** A thermal or chemical process for inactivating microorganisms on inanimate objects.

**Environmental cleaning:** Cleaning and disinfection (when needed, according to risk level) of environmental surfaces (e.g., bed rails, mattresses, call buttons, chairs) and surfaces of noncritical patient care equipment (e.g., IV poles, stethoscopes).

*Ends*