



Information about Environmental Controls to Limit Spread of Influenza in Schools: Routine Cleaning with Soap and Water Works

Fact Sheet

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The Connecticut Department of Public Health recommends following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance regarding cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects found in schools to control the spread of influenza virus. The guidance below is extracted from the CDC website.

Simply do routine cleaning and disinfecting.

- Use general cleaning products that you normally use. Always follow product label directions. **Additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended to control of spread of influenza viruses.**
- Routinely clean surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, and phones. Empty trash cans as needed.
- Use disinfecting wipes on electronic items that are touched often, such as phones and computers. Pay close attention to the directions for using disinfecting wipes. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of contact time. Make sure that the electronics can withstand the use of liquids for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Provide adequate supplies, such as general EPA-registered cleaning products, gloves, disinfecting wipes, and no-touch trash cans.
- It is not necessary to close schools to clean or disinfect every surface in the building to slow the spread of flu. Also, if students and staff are dismissed because the school cannot function normally (e.g., high absenteeism during a flu outbreak), it is not necessary to do extra *cleaning and disinfecting*.
- Special cleaning and disinfecting processes, including wiping down walls and ceilings, frequently using room air deodorizers, and fumigating, are not necessary or recommended. These processes can irritate eyes, noses,

throats, and skin; aggravate asthma; and cause other serious side effects.

Why Routine Cleaning Works

Flu viruses are relatively fragile, so standard practices, such as cleaning with soap and water, can help remove and kill them.

Studies have shown that the flu virus can live and potentially infect a person for only 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on a surface. Therefore, special sanitizing processes beyond routine cleaning, including closing schools to clean every surface in the building, are not necessary or recommended to slow the spread of flu, even during a flu outbreak.

Some schools may include other cleaning and disinfecting practices in their standard procedures to address germs that are not removed or killed by soap and water alone.

Resources:

- [How To Clean and Disinfect Schools To Help Slow the Spread of Flu](#) (CDC)
- [Guidance for School Administrators to Help Reduce the Spread of Seasonal Influenza in K-12 Schools](#) (CDC)
- [Green Cleaning in Child Care Settings](#) (CT DPH)