



H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) and You: ***Contamination & Cleaning for Non-Healthcare Settings***

REMEMBER: WASHING YOUR HANDS for 30 seconds with soap and warm water is the best way to get rid of flu germs.

How do germs, including the flu virus, get on to common surfaces?

- Respiratory droplets (saliva, mucus) from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and can land on common surfaces.
- Germs can be spread when a you touch respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk or counter, and then touch your own eyes, mouth or nose before washing your hands.

How long can flu virus stay on objects (like books and doorknobs) and still make you sick?

In the environment, influenza (flu) is a very weak virus and is easy to kill. Flu virus will only be infectious (make you sick) for a few minutes once it is exposure to air. But if the virus is protected from the air by respiratory secretions, like mucus or saliva, it can stay infectious for around 2-8 hours. This could happen when someone with the flu virus coughs or sneezes on to a surface leaving behind mucus and/or saliva.

Simple cleaning will get rid of most of the virus along with other material. If virus is left behind after cleaning, it will be exposed to air and become non-infectious within minutes.

What kills flu virus?

- Heat (167-212°F or 75-100°C)
- Chlorine
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Alcohols are effective against flu viruses if:
 - Used in proper concentration for a long enough time.
 - For example, wipes or gels with alcohol in them can be used to clean hands. The gels should be rubbed into hands until they are dry.
- Detergents (soap)
- Iodine-based antiseptics

How should I clean common surfaces?

To stop the spread of flu virus it is important to keep surfaces clean by **wiping them down with a regular household disinfectant according to directions on the product label**. You should

routinely clean areas that are touched often with the cleaners you typically use. No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended.

What surfaces are most likely to need cleaning?

- At home:
 - Bedside tables
 - Bathroom surfaces
 - Kitchen counters
 - Toys
- Any common surfaces at work:
 - Counters
 - Desks
 - Telephones
 - Keyboards
 - Hand rails
 - Bathroom surfaces

How should waste disposal be handled to prevent the spread of the flu virus?

To prevent the spread of the flu virus, tissues and other disposable items used by a sick person should be thrown in the trash. You should wash your hands with soap and water after touching used tissues and similar waste.

How should linens, eating utensils and dishes of people sick with the flu virus be handled?

Linens (such as bed sheets and towels), eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately. It is important that these items are not shared before washing thoroughly first.

Linens should be washed by using regular laundry soap and tumbled dry on a hot setting. You should avoid “hugging” laundry close to your body before to washing it to prevent getting the virus on yourself. You should wash your hands with soap and water immediately after handling dirty laundry.

Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

What if soap and water are not available and alcohol-based products are not allowed in my facility?

Even though there is not as much scientific evidence, other hand sanitizers that do not contain alcohol may be useful for killing flu germs on hands.

For the latest information check the **Napa County Public Health** website at: <http://www.co.napa.ca.us/publichealth>, the **CDC website** at <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu> or call the automated **Napa County Public Health** hotline at (707) 253-4540.