

Efficiently cleaning an aged care environment

Cleaning is an essential part of the prevention of healthcare-associated infections.

Contact with contaminated surfaces or objects in aged care environments can cause infections. So how do you keep an aged care facility clean?

Preparing the cleaners' trolley

Upon arrival, cleaners consult the table of products and the protocol for alternating between detergents and disinfectants. Some rules are immutable. Gloves are mandatory for all contact with products as part of the cleaning standards.

Never mix cleaning products because this can create dangerous chemical reactions. When using dilution equipment, ensure that it is well-maintained and kept in good condition.

Always refer to the manufacturer's instructions and renew cleaning solutions accordingly. Observe the temperature and contact time indicated.

Cleaners in aged care facilities prepare their trolley by selecting the equipment that they need to perform all the care services scheduled tasks. Staff use equipment that is in good condition, clean, and in compliance with safety regulations. Organising the trolley is as follows:

- Put the cleaning equipment at the top. This includes cleaning chemicals, disinfectants, sprays and wipes.
- Cleaning reserves are stored in the middle. This includes toilet paper, gloves and hand sanitisers.
- Put the brush and shovel on the dirty shelf or bottom shelf. This includes the bucket for dirty swabs, wipes and mops.
- Support for brooms and mop handles are located at the side of the trolley.
- The lid of the rubbish container can be removed via foot to avoid using the hand in handling the rubbish.
- One of the best cleaning practices is not to use sponges, coconut broom and wooden handles for cleaning an aged care facility.



Standard method in bedroom maintenance in aged care facilities

Hand hygiene is essential before cleaning, after cleaning, and whenever it is required, especially in changing gloves. The care environment for the aged care setting is crucial.

- Ventilate the room once the resident steps out. Offer the option when they are around while the cleaning takes place. Cover the patient if necessary.
- Dispose of the waste first.
- Staff begin by applying disinfectant to give it time to work. Follow a logical sequence in cleaning the aged care facilities. It needs to be from a clean area to a dirty area and from top to bottom.
- Wet sweeping high surfaces.
- Use a combined disinfectant and detergent to wet wipe higher surfaces.
- Wipe in a single pass.
- Spray the cleaning wipe and not the surfaces to limit and reduce aerosol dispersion and penetration to moisture sensitive materials such as telephones.
- Turn and change the wipes between each area and between each room across the facility.
- Allow drying.
- For daily maintenance of the facility, areas commonly touched are wiped to reduce the risk of spreading germs by hands.
- After changing cleaning cloths, care facilities staff will wet wipe higher surfaces in the bathroom using the same pattern.

- Aged care cleaners change wipes according to a pre-established colour code. They wipe and rinse according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Pre-treated gauze is sometimes needed in wet sweeping in aged care. Since it is moist, it needs to remain in the facility to use it. Aged care cleaner needs to place a single gauze under the sole of the broom. Wet sweeping should start at the farthest point away from the entrance of the room. In a small space with not so much furniture, wet sweeping is done in a semi-circular fashion. This method retrieves 90 per cent of loose dirt on dry and smooth floors – wet sweeping limits the take-off of dirt into the atmosphere.
- In cleaning aged care environments, never lift the broom. Remove the used gauze from the brush on the threshold. Lock the dirt in by folding the gauze. Dispose of the gauze in the rubbish bin.

Flat mopping

Like any washing procedures in a cleaning aged care facility, flat mopping is preceded by wet sweeping. The flat mop relies on a chemical and mechanical action to remove the dirt adhering to the floor and microorganisms they carry.

When using a detergent disinfectant, there is also a specific disinfectant action. This gives visual and microbiological cleanliness. The technique is the same as for wet sweeping. The cleaner began with the most distant part of the room and performed semi-circular movements. The mop is removed at the door.

Cleaning in aged care facilities is effectively done in the progressive method. It is by verifying the correct operation of equipment to be left and be placed in aged care facilities.

Moreover, some tasks constitute more in-depth maintenance which requires planning. This includes the vents, tops of wardrobes, or the thorough cleaning of beddings.

Cleaning staff are needed to brush sanitary installations and wooden furniture. Cleaning in aged care set up can be challenging but rewarding. Imagine your contribution to the health and wellness of our seniors.



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