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2020 April Topic

(SARS-CoV-2 is the virus and COVID-19 is the disease)

CLEANING OF HIGH TOUCH SURFACES DURING AN OUTBREAK (GENERAL PRACTICE)

For the purposes of cleaning, we divide surfaces into

- **high touch especially shared e.g. door handles, medicare buttons**
- **and minimally touched e.g shelves.**

In normal times (remember them?) we spot cleaned all high touch surfaces with a detergent wipe at lunchtime and the cleaner did them all again with made up detergent and paper towel each evening **didn't we / they?**

So during an outbreak (that's now) we go in a bit harder and do it more frequently, more thoroughly and follow cleaning with disinfecting.

SO WHAT MIGHT OUTBREAK CLEANING & DISINFECTING OF HIGH TOUCH SURFACES LOOK LIKE?

I suggest wipe over all shared high touch surfaces lunchtime and again late afternoon if you are running an evening clinic. Use your wipe which may be a 2 step in one detergent /disinfectant or a two step process which could be cleaning with a detergent and paper towel followed by disinfecting with your diluted bleach (add 20 mls of 5% bleach to a litre of cold water and put in 500 ml pour bottles not sprays). Or you could use Viraclean to both clean then disinfect (at least 0.4% benzylkonium chloride is straight and used for disinfecting, dilute 1:10 for cleaning). Or you could clean with your detergent and paper towel then wipe over with your isowipe or prowipe which is at 70% alcohol but

- remember to leave any disinfected surface wet for at least a minute to get a 4 log reduction in virus (good luck doing that with your alcohol wipes).

If you are over the smell of bleach then it's not a crime to remove the bleach after a couple of minutes with detergent and paper towel.

All disinfectants can damage some surfaces.

So what are we actually achieving with all this?

Cleaning removes the organic matter and soil that contains the virus so that when you apply the disinfectant afterwards, you are delivering an adequate concentration to inactivate the virus as long as you leave it wet for the correct time. In fact, if you don't clean before you disinfect then your disinfectant may not be able to reach the virus which may be protected in the soil etc. I prefer you to use two steps rather than a 2 in 1 step.

The tests for disinfectant activity against SARS-CoV-2 don't actually use this virus but a surrogate with similar properties plus it can be extremely unsafe to test against this virus, not to mention that testing against disinfectants is possibly not at the top of the list of priorities. It was only cultured in late January. The tests are standardized and for 10 minutes but a 4 log reduction (1 in 10,000 viruses remaining) is considered adequate after a minute and all three disinfectants mentioned above achieve this ie 0.4% benzylkonium chloride e.g. Viraclean, 1000ppm chlorine i.e. 0.1% bleach and 705 alcohol e.g. iso/prowipes

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