

# Keeping Areas Clean

Person-to-person spread, especially by soiled hands, is the major means of spread of infectious disease. In general, household surfaces play a minor role. However, regular cleaning is still important to maintain a healthy environment.

Cleaning with detergent and warm water is all that is usually necessary to maintain a clean and healthy environment. Unnecessary use of disinfectants encourages the development of bacteria that are harder to kill.

Kitchen hygiene is important to prevent food poisoning.

All surfaces in the kitchen – crockery, cutlery, bench tops, stoves and sinks, walls and the inside surfaces of cupboards – need to be kept clean. Leaving leftovers and spills to become dry will make them much harder to remove.

To effectively clean a surface in the kitchen you need to remove all visible soiling using detergent and warm water. This is usually all that is necessary. Surface disinfectants are usually not necessary and only work well on a surface that has already been cleaned.

If you do use a disinfectant, it is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions on its use. This includes how much water to add to it, what water temperature to use, and how long the object needs to be in contact with the disinfectant.

Diluted disinfectants deteriorate on standing. All diluted disinfectant should be used immediately after preparation.

Wear gloves when using chemical disinfectants as disinfectants are a common cause of dermatitis.

Empty buckets after use, wash with detergent and warm water and store dry.

Mops should be cleaned in detergent and warm water and stored dry.

Cleaning sponges should be changed frequently or disinfected regularly. Separate sponges should be used for cleaning dishes and cleaning floors. Floor spills should not be cleaned up with the dish sponge. Mop floor spills with a single-use paper towel that can be thrown away.

Dishes should be washed in warm to hot soapy water and rinsed in warm to hot water. (Always ensure water temperatures can be comfortably tolerated to avoid scalding. This is especially important for children and the elderly.) It is best to leave dishes to air dry. If you do this, don't place a tea towel over them as this will only spread bacteria from the tea towel onto the clean dishes. Change your tea towel when it becomes dirty or wet.

Separate chopping boards should be used for raw meats and ready-to-eat foods. If this cannot be done, the chopping board used for meat should be washed in hot soapy water and rinsed before being re-used. The same applies to utensils, knives, benches and plates. Chopping boards can be disinfected by washing in hot soapy water and then rinsing with diluted bleach, or washed in a dishwasher using the highest heat setting.

Clean inside your fridge and cupboards regularly. Crumbs in cupboards can attract pests and dirty fridges can carry bacteria and moulds.

## Hygiene in the garden

Sandpits can become contaminated with animal faeces and urine. Sandpits need to be properly constructed with adequate drainage. The sand should be raked often, and when not in use the area should be covered (for example, with a tarpaulin or shade cloth).

Many gardening activities bring the gardener into contact with organisms that can cause illness. Gardeners should wear gloves during gardening and always wash their hands before eating, drinking or smoking. If vegetables are brought into the kitchen from the home garden they should first be thoroughly washed outside of the house. Wash hands after using potting mix, and avoid inhaling the dust from it.

### Useful website

- > **Enjoying Gardening Without the Risk of *Legionella***  
<http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/PDF-files/enjoy-gardening07.pdf>