



## CleanHealth Environmental Risk Management Solutions

### ***Updated CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Private and Public Facilities: A Healthcare Perspective***

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On April 5, 2021, the CDC released updated *Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Private and Public Facilities*. The guidelines stem from a newly published CDC science brief titled *SARS-CoV-2 and Surface (Fomite) Transmission for Indoor Community Environments*, which summarizes recent research showing the low relative risk, nearly 1 in 10,000, of fomite transmission of SARS-CoV-2, compared with direct contact, droplet transmission, or airborne transmission.

Proper cleaning methods have long been recommended as the primary method of removing bioburden from a surface. Cleaning and disinfection is a two-step process. The initial step of cleaning physically removes the bulk of pathogens on the surface. The surfactants within detergent disrupt the lipid enveloped membrane of the virus, which consequentially disrupts cellular function. Recent research has found that in most situations, cleaning surfaces with detergent solutions is enough to reduce risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. Therefore, CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting public facilities and homes has been updated to recommend daily cleaning without the use of disinfectants on most hard surfaces.

CDC guidelines regarding high touch areas in public and private facilities continue to recommend surface disinfection be performed when there is high transmission of COVID-19 within a community, low number of people wearing masks, infrequent hand hygiene, or when the space is occupied by populations at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. In these cases, surfaces must be treated with a disinfectant product registered with EPA's List "N" to substantially inactivate SARS-CoV-2.

Of note, CDC's new recommendations are to be applied to community and private settings only that have no suspected cases of COVID-19. In healthcare settings where the infection prevalence rate is higher and the risk of transmission greater, disinfectants are necessary to kill pathogens on surfaces. In healthcare, frequent cleaning and disinfection is incorporated into daily policies and procedures. Recent research showing a low risk of fomite transmission was based on studies in public settings, without confirmed cases of COVID-19, and outdoor settings, where environmental conditions aid to degrade the virus.

In conclusion, the updated CDC guidelines are to be applied to community and private settings only. Research showing a low risk of fomite transmission was performed in public settings without confirmed cases of COVID-19 and in outdoor settings where environmental conditions can degrade the virus. In healthcare settings where the infection prevalence rate is higher and deposition of expelled virus particles onto surfaces (fomites) is more likely, frequent cleaning and disinfection remain the industry standard of care.