



This fact sheet explains how cleaning objects in homes and public places (can help to prevent the spread of influenza (flu).

How Flu Viruses Spread

- The main way that illness like colds and flu are spread is from person to person when droplets from the cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and make contact with the mouth or nose of people nearby.
- Droplets from an infected person can also make contact with environmental surfaces (like tabletops). The virus can then be spread from those surfaces if a person touches the droplets and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth, or nose before washing his or her hands.
- The virus also can be spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes into his or her hands and then touches an item (like a phone, remote control, or toy) before washing his or her hands. Another person could become sick if he or she touches that surface and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth, or nose before washing.
- Flu viruses and other germs can live for a number of hours to days on a variety of surfaces. It is important to wash your hands often, keep your hands away from your face, and keep commonly touched surfaces clean to help prevent the spread of germs.

Cleaning in Homes and Public Places

- No special disinfectants or waste handling practices are needed. Regular household or commercial cleaning products and the usual standards of waste handling are adequate. Dishes, clothing, and sheets used by an individual with flu-like illness can be washed using ordinary detergent and water.
- Surfaces that are likely to be touched often by a number of people should be cleaned at least twice daily. Examples include doorknobs, cupboard and refrigerator handles, faucets, toilet flushing handles, telephones, and remote controls.
- Horizontal surfaces such as tables or counters that are used by many people may also require increased cleaning frequency.
- Use sanitizer cloths or a cloth very lightly moistened in soapy water to wipe electronic items that are touched often, such as phones, computers, remote controls, and hand-held games.
- Follow cleaning product instructions and hazard warnings carefully.

Related Source: Individual and Community Based Measures to Help Prevent Transmission of Influenza-Like-Illness (ILI) in the Community, Including the Pandemic Influenza (H1N1) 2009 Virus, Public Health Agency of Canada, http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/hp-ps-info_health-sante-eng.php