

Clean-up Procedures for Vomit and Diarrhea

When someone vomits, germs such as norovirus can spread through the air and contaminate surfaces and food up to 25 feet away. Consumers and employees are at risk of contracting norovirus or other illnesses from direct exposure to vomit or from exposure to airborne norovirus from vomit.

Effective clean-up of vomit & diarrhea in a food establishment should be handled differently from routine cleaning procedures and involves a more stringent cleaning and disinfecting process.

A clean-up and response plan is intended to address proper procedures to reduce exposures to norovirus or other contaminants. Time effective clean-up is imperative.

First Steps

- Remove all individuals within a 25-foot radius and ask them to wash hands immediately.
- Block entry to contaminated area.
- Dispose all uncovered food, and single use containers and utensils within 25-foot radius.
- Wash all utensils and equipment within 25-foot radius.

Clean up

- Remove vomit or diarrhea right away.
- Wear protective clothing, such as disposable gloves, shoe covers, apron, and face mask. Change if they become contaminated.
- Wipe up vomit or diarrhea with paper towels – place the paper towels over the waste then carefully remove the towels and its contents – do not vacuum the material.
- Work from the clean areas towards the most contaminated areas to minimize the spread of infectious material.
- Use kitty litter, baking soda, or other absorbent material on carpets and upholstery to absorb liquid.
- Dispose of paper towels/cleaning clothes and waste in a plastic trash bag or biohazard bag.
- Place contaminated tablecloths, cloth napkins, and cloth towels into a separate plastic bag for transport to laundry or discard.
- Use soapy water to wash surfaces that contacted the vomit or diarrhea and all nearby surfaces, such as doorknobs and toilet handles.
- Rinse thoroughly with plain water and wipe dry with paper towels.
- Clean and disinfect any non-disposable tools (mop heads) used.
- Place disposable protective clothing, rags, and towels in a sealed garbage bag. Seal and place in disposal area.
- Remove all clothing or fabrics that may be contaminated. Machine wash and dry with detergent and hot water on longest cycle and high heat setting.

Disinfect surfaces by applying a chlorine bleach solution

Steam cleaning may be preferable for carpets and upholstery. Chlorine bleach could permanently stain these. Mixing directions are based on EPA-registered bleach product directions to be effective against norovirus.

- Prepare a chlorine bleach solution (CDC & EPA recommendations):
 - ¾ cup of concentrated bleach + 1 gallon water (concentration ~3500ppm) OR
 - 1 cup of regular strength bleach + 1 gallon water
- Use a spray bottle and saturate the area and surfaces (25-foot radius).
- Leave surface wet for at least 5 minutes.
- Rinse all surfaces intended for food or mouth contact with plain water before use.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water

Hand sanitizers may not be effective against norovirus.