**Basic Medical Office Cleaning Guidelines for COVID-19 Prevention**

**Purpose:** Limit patient exposure to COVID-19, and ensure patient comfort and confidence, by establishing clear policies for increased cleaning and sterilization in general use areas of clinics and medical offices.

**Ensure everyone who enters your space is practicing good hand hygiene**

Unclean hands defeat the purpose of any other recommendations on this list. Make sure the following are happening in your office:

* **CDC guidelines encourage washing hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.**
* Staff should regularly wash their hands and avoid touching their faces.
* Patients should be encouraged to wash their hands upon entry into the practice.
* Your practice may want to provide hand sanitizer to patients (as available). Only hand sanitizer with a

65-95% alcohol volume is effective in preventing COVID-19.

**Disinfect all commonly touched surfaces and tools regularly**

All items/areas in the office which are touched by staff and patients should be cleaned/disinfected regularly. The CDC has not currently provided a guideline for what “regularly” means; you will want to establish a cleaning schedule based on the number of visitors to your office. Items/areas which should be disinfected regularly include the following:

* All bathroom surfaces
* All exam room surfaces
* Any other items regularly touched in your office/clinic.
* Clipboards
* Debit/Credit terminals
* Door handles (pay special attention to those likely to be touched prior to handwashing)
* Front Desk counter areas
* Keyboards
* Pens
* Telephones
* Waiting room tables and chairs

The EPA provides a list of cleaning products that have been demonstrated to kill SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19. That list, as well as FAQ’s, can be found here:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

**Reduce virus exposure during laundering procedures**

If your practice uses linens, clothing (such as gowns), or any other items that are laundered, observe the following best practices:

* Do not shake dirty laundry.
* Launder items using the warmest water appropriate for the type of fabric.
* Include hampers, carts, and other laundry containers in your plan for cleaning hard surfaces.

**Use Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) only as needed.**

There is an urgent shortage of PPE across medical facilities at this time. Use PPE as required for your safety *when necessary* during cleaning, but as much as possible, your practice will want to conserve it for more urgent needs. When you do need to use PPE, observe these guidelines.

* Wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.
* Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used.
* Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
* Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to clean hands after removing gloves.
* Cleaning staff should immediately report breaches in PPE (e.g., tear in gloves) or any potential exposures to their supervisor.
* Practice good hand hygiene as outlined above.

**Utilize a cleaning log to ensure consistent practices**

In-house staff and any outside cleaning crews should always be able to tell when an area of the office/clinic was last cleaned. Ensure consistency by doing the following:

* Clearly establish which staff are responsible for each cleaning task (it’s not enough that “someone” will wipe down the pens—who will?)
* Determine a schedule for items/areas that are regularly used. (This schedule may vary for each item. For example, the front office door handles may need to be cleaned more often than the exam room door handles).
* Create a chart or a set of charts for the areas that need to be checked regularly. Be sure to include space for time cleaned and team member name.

**General cleaning tips:**

* Always follow manufacturer’s guidelines for any commercial or household cleaning products used.
* Surfaces which are dirty/soiled should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
* For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most disinfectants that are included on the EPA-approved list can be used. Use the following formulas if you need to prepare a diluted bleach solution:
  + 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
  + 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
* Never mix cleaning products without checking to ensure they are safe to mix (for example, bleach and vinegar combined can cause toxic fumes).

**Share best practices with colleagues**

TTG maintains two Facebook groups for sharing tips and successes with colleagues. We welcome you to share thoughts, questions, and information. Please join us!

Physicians Forum:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ttgcovid19physiciangroup/>

Practice Admin Forum:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ttgcovid19team>/