

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

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Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

Cleaning Guidance for Households with Cases of Influenza A

During an outbreak of influenza, householders living in the same house as those suffering from influenza are at particularly high risk of contracting the disease. Additional measures should be implemented to minimise the risk of influenza transmission. These guidelines have been developed to advise householders of cleaning strategies to reduce this risk. The influenza virus can contaminate the environment through coughing and sneezing as droplets fall onto environmental surfaces. The virus can also be transmitted by contaminated hands that pick up it up from objects in the every day environment. The virus can live for minutes to hours depending on the type of surface, thus enhanced cleaning of rooms, toilets and bathrooms used by cases should be undertaken. Surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should also be cleaned often, ideally several times a day, particularly hard surfaces such as door handles, taps, benches and bathroom fixtures.

Virtually all household cleaning agents have activity against influenza A virus, but bleach is cheap and effective.

Household bleach is a high level disinfectant capable of killing the influenza virus. In order to work properly bleach disinfectant needs:

- Enough time to kill – at least 30 minutes contact time is ideal.
- Sufficient strength or concentration.
- A surface free of dirt.

Supermarket bleaches (e.g. Janola, White Magic, Domestos) are suitable and cheap disinfectants to use to wipe down surfaces that are regularly used by others. Supermarket bleaches are sold in different strengths, usually 2-5% sodium hypochlorite solution. The strength is written on the label. The recommended concentration of bleach disinfectant is 1000ppm (0.1%) hypochlorite. To achieve this, the following table provides a guide to diluting supermarket bleach of differing concentrations.

Original strength of bleach		Disinfectant Recipe		Amt of bleach in a standard 10 litre bucket
%	Parts per million	Parts of bleach	Parts of water	
1	10,000	1	9	1000mls
2	20,000	1	19	500mls
3	30,000	1	29	333mls
4	40,000	1	39	250mls
5	50,000	1	49	200mls

- Make the bleach solution up fresh each day and discard any leftovers after 24 hours.
- Keep diluted bleach covered, protected from sunlight & heat, in a dark container (if possible) and keep out of reach of children. A spray bottle is an effective way to use bleach solution.
- **When cleaning, wear non-sterile gloves.**
- Spray the bleach solution onto hard surfaces for 10 minutes before wiping off. If items are being placed into a bleach solution then it is recommended that the item is soaked for 30 minutes.
- Bleach should not be used on soft furnishings. Soft furnishing contaminated by respiratory secretions should be cleaned with hot soapy water.
- Once an item or surface is disinfected allow it to air dry.
- Disposable cloths should be used for cleaning surfaces and disposed of after use. If reusable cloths are used soak in bleach solution and allow to air dry.
- Make sure dishes are washed using hot water either by hand or a dishwasher. If possible wear rubber gloves when washing dishes by hand.
- There are no special laundry requirements.
- **All gloves worn during cleaning should be removed and disinfected or disposed of if disposable. Those carrying out cleaning should avoid touching their faces with gloved or unwashed hands.**
- **Wash hands with warm soapy water (or an alcohol-based sanitizer) for at least 20 seconds and dry them for 20 seconds immediately after the gloves are removed.**
- Do not share items with other household members, such as eating utensils and drink bottles.