

Cleaning up diarrhea: Overview

When cleaning up diarrhea, it is important to remember that germs can spread very easily. This can happen when people or items in the home come into contact with diarrhea. Careful cleaning can help reduce the chance of spreading germs.

Experts recommend that you wear disposable gloves when cleaning up diarrhea or other body fluids. You may wear reusable rubber gloves if you wash and disinfect them after each use. If you don't have gloves, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water when you are finished.

How do you clean up diarrhea from skin?

1. Wear disposable gloves.
2. Use damp paper towels to wipe up the stool off the skin and put the used paper towels in a plastic trash bag.
3. Gently wash the area with warm water and a soft cloth. Rinse well, and dry completely.
 - Do not use any soap on the person's bottom unless the area is very soiled. If soap is needed, use only a mild soap, such as Cetaphil.
 - If there's a rash on the skin, do not clean the skin with wet wipes that have alcohol or propylene glycol. These wipes may sting the skin.
4. Remove the gloves and throw them away in a plastic bag. Then wash your hands with soap and water right away.

How do you clean up diarrhea from soiled linens and clothes?

1. Wear disposable gloves.
2. Wipe off any stool with paper towels and put the used paper towels in a plastic trash bag. Small amounts of stool can easily be removed with toilet paper and flushed down the toilet.
3. Put the linens in a large plastic bag. The bag should prevent moisture from leaking through. Take the bag to the washing machine.
4. Put the linens in the washing machine. Wash items in a pre-wash cycle first, then use a regular wash cycle with detergent. Use the warmest temperatures recommended on their labels.
5. After you finish handling soiled clothes, remove your gloves and throw them away in a plastic bag. Then wash your hands with soap and water right away.

6. Dry clothes and linens in a clothes dryer. Use the warmest temperature recommended on the labels.

There is no need to disinfect the tubs of the washer or the dryer after a full cycle is completed.

How do you clean up diarrhea from hard surfaces?

1. Wear disposable gloves.
2. Wipe up the stool with paper towels and put the used paper towels in a plastic trash bag. Rinse the surfaces with water.
3. Disinfect hard surfaces with diluted household bleach or with disinfectants that you buy at the store. Wet the surface with the diluted bleach or disinfectant, and let it air dry.
 - To dilute household bleach, follow the directions on the label.
 - If you mix your own diluted bleach, use goggles or glasses to protect your eyes from splashes.
 - Be aware that diluted bleach may remove colour from some hard surfaces.
4. Remove your gloves, and throw them away in a plastic bag. Then wash your hands with soap and water right away.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information call Health Link at 811.

Current as of: April 1, 2019

Author: [Healthwise Staff](#)

Medical Review: Adam Husney, MD - Family Medicine & Elizabeth T. Russo, MD - Internal Medicine & Gayle E. Stauffer, RN - Registered Nurse & Kathleen Romito, MD - Family Medicine