

Summary Sheet for Environmental Cleaning

Best Practice Document Reference: Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. [Best practices for environmental cleaning for prevention and control of infections in all health care settings](#). 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2018.

What is environmental cleaning?

- The routine cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces, items and equipment

Cleaning: removal of microorganisms in foreign and organic material with mechanical action, water and detergent

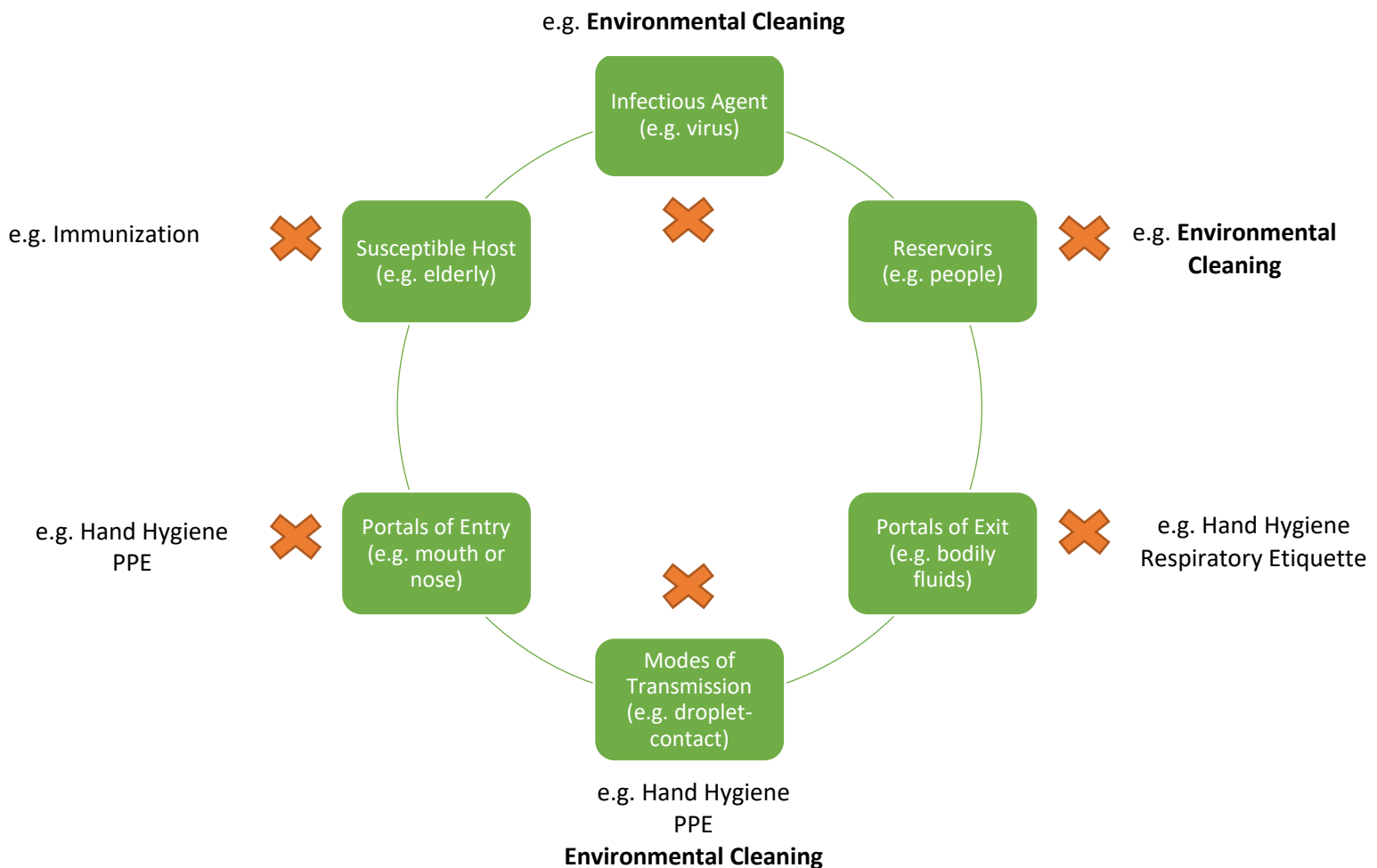
Disinfection: disease producing microorganisms are inactivated (cleaning must take place prior to disinfection)

Why is environmental cleaning important?

- Contaminated surfaces, items and equipment contribute to transmission of microorganisms
- Environmental cleaning is one way to break the chain of transmission

Chain of Transmission

- To stop the spread of microorganisms, we want to break the chain of transmission



What level of disinfection should I be using?

Level of Disinfection	What it does	When to Use
Low	Destroys vegetative bacteria and some fungi and viruses but not mycobacteria or spores.	Use on non-critical items that require low-level disinfection and environmental surfaces.
Intermediate	Destroys vegetative bacteria, mycobacteria, most viruses, and most fungi but not bacterial spores.	Use on non-critical items that require intermediate-level disinfection.
High	Destroys or irreversibly inactivates all microbial pathogens (bacteria, fungi, and viruses), but not necessarily large numbers of bacterial spores.	Use on semi-critical items and items that hold, manipulate, or contact critical items.

Reference: [At a glance: Disinfectant Tables \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#)

What is contact time?

- The length of time that a surface must remain wet with a disinfectant solution in order for the disinfection to be effective

What are some things to keep in mind while performing cleaning and disinfection?

- Work from clean to dirty and from high to low areas. If there are rooms with additional precautions, leave these rooms until last, if possible.
- Do not double dip or reuse cloths and mop heads
- Have a checklist with defined responsibilities for cleaning and disinfection
- The total number of products in use should be limited as much as possible to simplify the cleaning process, minimize training requirements and reduce the potential for error and inadequate disinfection