

2018 AAHA INFECTION CONTROL, PREVENTION, AND BIOSECURITY GUIDELINES



9 Common Disinfection Mistakes

During training and any later staff coaching on infection control expectations and protocols, pay attention to these common mistakes:

1 Eyeballing disinfectant solution mixtures.

Always follow label instructions for dilution and use of a disinfectant. Measure everything. The tendency is to go light on the disinfectant, either due to incorrect measurements or an attempt to save money by using less product. Both strategies can lead to a disinfectant solution that is too weak to work properly.

2 Failing to reach designated contact time.

In other words, the surface being cleaned does not stay wet with the right level of diluted disinfectant for the full length of time required for efficacy.

3 Confusing sanitizing with disinfecting.

Sanitizing reduces the number of bacteria on a surface or object to a safe level. Disinfecting kills bacteria, viruses, and mold on a surface.

4 Not knowing the shelf-life of the disinfectant being used.

In addition to knowing the shelf-life of the concentrated disinfectant, it's important to know how long the disinfectant, once diluted, will continue to work properly. The diluted shelf-life for some disinfectants may only be 24 hours, or as much as 90 days, so be sure you're not wasting product by mixing up too much at once or using expired product.

5 Topping off diluted disinfectant bottles, rather than starting each time with a cleaned bottle and fresh batch.

Making this mistake means you've just mixed old disinfectant with new. This can lead to an overdiluted or inactivated mixture. In other words, it won't work as well.

6 Mixing cleaning chemicals.

In addition to the potential for dangerous interactions, there's a chance that adding one chemical to another will cause the disinfectant to not work properly. For example, if you add a scented product to your disinfectant simply because you like the smell better, there's a chance the chemical mixture won't be as potent as it needs to be.



7

Spraying a surface and then wiping it with a dry cloth.

Contact times for disinfectants mean how long the surface needs to stay wet with

disinfecting solution for full efficacy. If you wet a surface down via spray bottle and immediately wipe the surface dry, it won't be effective. In addition, spray bottles increase the risk of a pathogen getting blasted onto another surface. It's better to spray the disinfectant onto the cloth to wet it down, then use physical friction to apply the product to the surface. This helps pick up any soil or debris microbes you cannot see and provides a more even distribution of the disinfectant solution onto the surface than random splatters from the spray bottle. When the disinfectant air dries you have a better chance of achieving the designated contact time.

8

Not giving or receiving product-specific training to veterinary team members.

Just because you learned how to clean from a family member at

home doesn't mean you know how to properly clean and disinfect in a veterinary healthcare setting. And, just because you know how to use one disinfectant does not mean you know how to use another one. Different disinfectants work in different ways with various dilution rates, contact times, and safety precautions. Disinfectant manufacturers or sales reps can provide training materials or lead staff training sessions. Just ask.

9

Not getting buy-in from team members on a switch to a new product.

Change can be hard for individuals

and teams. If people do not like or do not understand a new disinfectant product, your infection control program can be at risk of failing.