

**Happy  
Infection Control  
Week!**

## IPAC Fast Fact # 6



REGIONAL INFECTION  
CONTROL NETWORKS

*Giving Health a Helping Hand*

## Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection in Health Care

### Did You Know?

- The key to cleaning is the use of friction to remove microorganisms and debris
- Cleaning is an essential part of the disinfection process
- An item that has not been properly cleaned cannot be effectively disinfected or sterilized
- All reusable equipment must be cleaned between uses

**Cleaning** is the removal of foreign material (e.g. dust, soil, organic material such as blood, secretions, excretions and microorganisms) from a surface or object. Cleaning physically removes rather than kills microorganisms. It is accomplished with water, detergents and mechanical action.

**Disinfection** is the inactivation of disease-producing microorganisms.

Disinfection does not destroy bacterial spores. Medical equipment/devices must be cleaned thoroughly before effective disinfection can take place.

**Environment** of the client/patient/resident is the immediate space around the client/patient/resident that may be touched by the client/patient/resident and may also be touched by the healthcare provider when providing care.

**Low Level Disinfection** eliminates vegetative bacteria, some fungi and enveloped viruses. It is used for noncritical medical equipment and some environmental surfaces.

**High Level Disinfection** eliminates vegetative bacteria, enveloped and non-enveloped viruses, fungi and mycobacteria. It is used for semicritical medical equipment.