

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BLEACH CONCENTRATIONS

For those of you who use a diluted bleach solution for sanitizing and disinfecting your child care facility, manufacturers of household bleach have changed the concentration of bleach sold by retail stores and chemical suppliers. The new bleach solutions vary between 6.0 % to 8.25 % sodium hypochlorite solution. These concentrations are higher than the formerly available bleach solution of 5.25 % that is no longer being manufactured. All recipes used in SNHD regulations and guidelines were based on a 5.25 % solution of sodium hypochlorite and should no longer be used.

Because of the differing concentrations, the recommendations for diluting a bleach solution for sanitizing or disinfecting depend upon the specific bleach. It is no longer possible to provide a generic bleach recipe for sanitizing and disinfecting.

In order to make the appropriate strength solution, it is **ESSENTIAL** that you:

1. Follow the manufacturer's label instructions for dilution and verify the strength of the solution using chlorine test strips.
2. Comply with the label instructions for the required contact time (keeping the surface wet with the bleach solution) for either sanitizing or disinfecting purposes.
3. Provide a potable water rinse if required by the manufacturer.

**A SANITIZING SOLUTION** needs to be used for food contact surfaces such as: dishes, utensils, tables and high chair trays, or toys that a child may place in the mouth.

**A DISINFECTING SOLUTION** needs to be used for: diapering areas, bathrooms, general purpose on floors, walls, high touch areas, and toys that are not placed in the mouth.

- **USE ONLY EPA** registered products for sanitizing and disinfecting
- **ALWAYS** follow the manufacturer's instructions that are listed on the label
- **CLEAN FIRST** prior to **ANY** sanitizing or disinfecting, scrub with soap and water, followed by a water rinse to remove soap and other residue
- **DO NOT** mix bleach solutions with other household chemicals
- **PREPARE** working containers of sanitizing and disinfecting solutions daily
- **DO NOT** use scented, splashless or color-safe bleach
- **OBTAIN and USE** chlorine test strips to verify proper dilution as specified by the manufacturer
- **ASSURE** proper contact time prior to returning item or surface to use
- **CLEARLY LABEL** all working containers, and keep out of reach of children
- **FOLLOW** manufacturer's label instructions for possible required water rinse following the appropriate contact time
- **WHEN YOU USE** a new bottle of bleach, remember to check the manufacturer's label instructions



# Two-Step Cleaning and Sanitizing

Cleaning is the removal of food and debris from a surface. Cleaning alone does not consistently reduce contamination to safe levels. Surfaces must be cleaned AND sanitized after each use to reduce the number of illness causing microorganisms to acceptable levels.

## Cleaning Surfaces

- Scrub the surface with soap/detergent and water or commercially-prepared disinfectant-detergent pre-moistened wipes.
- Wipe the surface with fresh water to remove soap and other residue.

## Selecting an Appropriate Sanitizer or Disinfectant

Chlorine bleach solution is the most commonly used sanitizer. The solution must be prepared daily. Do not use ultra, scented, splashless or color-safe bleach.

A product that is not chlorine bleach can be used in child care settings if ALL of the following apply:

1. It is registered with the EPA.
2. It is described as a sanitizer or as a disinfectant.
3. It is used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Check the label to see how long you need to leave the sanitizer or disinfectant in contact with the surface you are treating, whether you need to rinse it off before contact by children, for any precautions when handling, and whether it can be used on a surface that may come in contact with child's mouth.

## Sanitizing Surfaces

- Wet entire surface until glistening or if commercially-prepared disinfectant-detergent pre-moistened wipe was used, a second wipe may be used for sanitizing.
- Leave solution on surface until air dried.
- OR, follow manufacturer's label instructions.

## Approved Methods of Sanitizer Application

### WIPING CLOTHS STORED IN CONTAINERS

- Store out of children's reach, away from food and children's items. Secure so the container does not tip or spill.
- Store wiping cloths in a container between uses.
- Properly label containers.
- Replace solution daily, when the concentration gets weak or the solution becomes cloudy.

### SPRAY BOTTLES

- Store out of children's reach, away from food and children's items.
- Store in a secondary container, if necessary.
- Properly label the spray bottle with "sanitizer" or name of chemical.
- Never spray around open food or children's personal items, avoiding a fine mist.
- Replace solutions daily.

### WIPES/COMMERCIALY PREPARED SOLUTIONS

- Follow the manufacturer's label instructions.