

Disinfection and Facility Maintenance

Innovations help facilities fight infections without damaging surfaces.



In healthcare facilities, from doctor's offices to acute-care hospitals, long-term care facilities and everything in between, a clean and disinfected environment is important for patient safety and satisfaction. Stakeholders in healthcare contracting know that both issues have serious financial implications for health systems and their facilities, and as such, are important considerations when it comes to product selection and purchasing. This is the case not only with regard to surface disinfectants, but also the materials, furniture and equipment on which they are used.

The evolution of healthcare surface disinfectants

One of the top threats to patient safety are healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), the five most common of which cost the U.S. healthcare system nearly \$10 billion per year.¹ Because environmental surfaces like hand rails, furniture and medical equipment are susceptible to contamination with healthcare-associated pathogens that can survive on surfaces for prolonged periods and contribute to transmission, thorough cleaning and disinfection are vital components of infection prevention and control activities to reduce HAIs. Over time, the solutions available to combat this threat have evolved.

In addition to legacy dilutable disinfectants that leverage quaternary ammonium compounds, technological advances in disinfectant chemistry have

enabled the development of pre-mixed, ready-to-use, shelf-stable solutions that harness the power of fast-acting oxidative chemistries like bleach and hydrogen peroxide. These innovations offer a range of benefits. For example, Clorox Healthcare® Bleach Germicidal Wipes, which are EPA-registered to kill 58 microorganisms in three minutes or less, offer the broad-spectrum disinfection efficacy and utility in *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*) prevention that facilities rely on, while also helping reduce compliance risks and labor costs associated with dilutable disinfectants.

Selecting disinfecting solutions with broad-spectrum antimicrobial efficacy that are fast acting, easy to use and available in formats that encourage

compliant use is an important first step toward eliminating the environment as a source of HAIs. At the same time, appropriate care must be taken to protect environmental surfaces and medical devices which are critical investments for healthcare facilities.

Taking aim at compatibility

Damage to surfaces and equipment, which can happen as a result of using powerful disinfectants, can lead to costly repairs or replacements, as well as pose safety implications. Corrosion can cause pitting, or otherwise compromise the integrity of healthcare surfaces, increasing the risk of contamination and limiting the efficacy of treatment with manual surface disinfectants. All disinfectants can cause surface compatibility issues if used improperly, but understanding potential challenges and selecting products designed to minimize them can help facilities protect against pathogens while also protecting surfaces.

In recent years, manufacturers have also placed greater emphasis on surface compatibility and Clorox Healthcare is leading the way with the introduction of products that allow healthcare facilities to leverage powerful, fast-acting chemistries that they trust to kill pathogens, without having to compromise on surface compatibility and aesthetics. Clorox Healthcare offers the most robust portfolio of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-registered surface cleaners and disinfectants, in addition to UV technology, to provide healthcare facilities with a comprehensive approach to environmental hygiene for HAI prevention. Long trusted as a leader in disinfectant efficacy, Clorox Healthcare also understands that healthcare facilities need to safeguard surfaces and equipment from damage.

In September 2016, Clorox Healthcare introduced Clorox Healthcare® Fuzion™ Cleaner

Disinfectant, a new solution that utilizes a pH-neutral form of bleach called hypochlorous acid and improves cleaning performance by combining the proven power of bleach with the aesthetics required for broad use throughout healthcare facilities. The powerful formula kills *C. difficile* spores in two minutes, but won't cause damage to common healthcare surfaces.

The launch of Fuzion was an important milestone, but the company's mission to improve compatibility and optimize products for user experience and patient satisfaction did not stop there. Recently, Clorox Healthcare reformulated its leading ready-to-use disinfectants, Clorox Healthcare® Bleach Germicidal Wipes and Clorox Healthcare® Hydrogen Peroxide Cleaner Disinfectants,

to offer the same trusted disinfecting efficacy with even better surface compatibility, less residue and less odor.

Beyond product innovations, Clorox Healthcare also launched Clorox Healthcare Compatible™ to help equipment manufacturers meet FDA guidelines for the validation of cleaning and disinfection of medical devices. With Clorox Healthcare Compatible™, Clorox Healthcare works with manufacturers to validate compatibility claims via third-party testing and identifies which disinfectant products are safe for use on everything from lights and beds to infusion pumps and ultrasound transducers.

Equipment manufacturers also endorse the use of approved Clorox Healthcare disinfectants in their user guides for easy reference.

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Safeguard patient environments from pathogens and surface damage

Achieving balance between disinfectant efficacy and surface compatibility is possible, but requires a holistic view of facility maintenance and careful consideration of cleaning and disinfecting products as well as the surfaces, materials and equipment on which they are used. With prudent purchasing decisions and consistent, compliant use, healthcare facilities can better protect patients from dangerous pathogens and preserve the medical equipment and environmental surfaces that are a vital to delivering quality care. **JHC**

1 Zimlichman, E et al. "Health Care-Associated Infections: A Meta-Analysis of Costs and Financial Impact on the US Health Care System." JAMA Internal Medicine 173.22 (2013): 2039–2046. Web.