

A Healthy Home

Maintaining cleaning and hygiene practices, which once might have felt like just a chore, takes on a new meaning when you bring your baby home. Here are some quick and easy tips to care for your growing family.

Know the Difference Between Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Cleaning:

Removing unwanted contaminants, such as soil, dirt and grease, from a surface, material, or your hands, using soap and water or a proper surface cleaner.

Sanitizing:

When sanitizing, you're reducing (but not necessarily eliminating) the number of bacteria on the surface to levels considered safe as determined by public health codes or regulations.

Disinfecting:

When disinfecting surfaces and objects, you're irreversibly inactivating pathogens (microorganisms that may cause infections and disease) including bacteria, viruses and fungi.

When cleaning, sanitizing or disinfecting, ALWAYS follow the directions on the label and do not mix products or chemicals.

Adjusting Your Cleaning Routine

Regular Routine

- Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs, electronics, faucets, countertops and toys.
- Wipe down the kitchen at least once a week, cleaning the fridge, microwave and floors.
- Always wash hands after cleaning, especially after tasks like changing a diaper or taking out the trash.
- Do laundry at least once a week, or every other day if washing diapers.
- Regularly clean the baby highchair after each meal.

Cleaning when Baby is sick:

- Disinfect frequently-touched surfaces regularly.
- Once the baby feels better, wash or disinfect all the toys they may have touched while they were sick.
- Have the whole household wash their hands more frequently, following proper handwashing practices.
- Have hand sanitizer readily available for when washing with soap and water is not possible.
- Take extra steps when laundering the sick baby's clothes, blankets, and crib bedding by washing with a deeper cleaning detergent and washing and drying on hot.

How to Clean, Sanitize and Disinfect Toys:

For toys with a porous surface, like teddy bears:

- Make sure the item is machine washable.
- Put the toy in a mesh laundry bag or pillowcase that is tightly secured at the top.
- Launder on the delicate cycle, using cold water and regular detergent or laundry sanitizer.
- Keep in the mesh bag or pillowcase and dry on a low setting.

For toys with plastic or hard surfaces:

- Remove any dirt or soil by washing with soap and water.
- Sanitize or disinfect with EPA registered products, always reading the label to ensure proper use of the disinfectant.
- Let the disinfectant dry, then rinse toys before returning them to the baby.
- Toys that can be put in the mouth should be sanitized and rinsed between uses.
- Frequently disinfect play spaces.

