

# At Home Cleaning & Disinfecting

## a Fact Sheet for Parents

### **Cleaners and Disinfectants**

Cleaners lift dirt and germs off surfaces so they can be rinsed away with water. Cleaning with a detergent is necessary to remove dirt that may prevent disinfectants from working. Disinfectants destroy bacteria.

### **What Items Should be Cleaned and/or Disinfected at Home**

- Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected after each use and allowed to dry.
- Equipment–like helmets and protective gear–should be cleaned and disinfected according to the equipment manufacturers' instructions.
- Jerseys, practice uniforms, undergarments, compression sleeves, sweatbands, under helmet hair/head covers and mouth guards should all be cleaned and disinfected.
- MRSA and other bacteria can spread on laundry–sheets, towels and clothing–so it's important to regularly wash these items, just like cleaning and disinfecting athletic gear.
- Routine laundry procedures, detergents and laundry additives will all help clothes, towels and linens safe to wear or touch. If items have been contaminated by infectious material (like blood or puss), they can be laundered separately, but it is not absolutely necessary.

### **How Should Items be Cleaned and/or Disinfected**

- Detergent-based cleaners or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered detergents/disinfectants will remove bacteria from surfaces.
- Caution: cleaners and disinfectants, including household chlorine bleach, can be irritating and exposure to these chemicals has been associated with health problems such as asthma and skin and eye irritation.
- Take appropriate precautions described on the product's label instructions to reduce exposure. Wearing personal protective equipment such as gloves and eye protection may be indicated.

### **Does Everything Need to be Cleaned with Hot Water**

- According to the CDC, hot water washing is not ALWAYS necessary to remove bacteria from laundry.
- Water temperatures for household laundry and athletic equipment depend on the type of fiber or fabric. Some laundry detergents are made to clean best at certain temperatures. It is important to follow the instructions on the detergent to maximize effectiveness.
- Detergent alone will make laundry clean and safe for wear and use. Use of bleach as a disinfectant in laundering is optional and not all fabrics are suitable for bleach. Read the clothing label instructions.



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