Spills cleaning protocols

The method for cleaning spills in your practice will depend on the volume of the spill and where it occurs (hard surfaces or textiles).

Do not use liquid on a spill, as this will spread the spill.

If the spill is on a **hard surface**:

1. Confine and contain the spill with an absorbing agent suitable for that spill type:

For blood, use wads of paper towel or purpose-designed absorbent agent.

For vomitus, use a clumping agent to cover and deodorise.

Scoop or wipe up and safely remove any solid matter and excess material.

1. Clean with detergent and water or detergent wipes.
2. Dry the surface.
3. Use disinfectant, if required.
4. Dispose of contaminated material, including personal protective equipment, as instructed in the cleaning and waste management policies.
5. Cleanse hands.

If the spill is on **soft textile fabric or carpet**:

For non-removeable textile fabric (eg upholstery) or standard carpet:

1. Cover the site with an absorbent agent (cat litter, polymerising beads or other absorbent material).
2. Scoop up residue safely without causing material to disperse.
3. Damp-pat surface (do not wipe or scrub) to remove more material.
4. Dispose of contaminated material, including personal protective equipment, as instructed in the cleaning policy.
5. Clean fabric or carpet by damp patting with dampened disposable cloth using detergent and water or recommended carpet cleaning agent.
6. Quarantine the area until the soft fabric or carpet is dry. (Arrange steam cleaning when dry, if needed – do not vacuum-clean.)
7. Discard the used cleaning materials in the appropriate waste container.
8. Cleanse hands.

For removable fabric or carpet tiles, remove from the area, clean as for non-removable textiles, and replace when completely dry. Heavily contaminated carpet tiles can be discarded.

The [spills cleaning protocols table](#spills) below can be used by your practice to determine the method for cleaning spills.

This table is drawn from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners [*Infection prevention and control guidelines for general practices and other office-based and community-based practices*](https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/practice-standards/racgp-infection-prevention-and-control-guidelines/table-of-contents). Refer to [Cleaning after contamination by blood or other body substances (spills)](https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/practice-standards/racgp-infection-prevention-and-control-guidelines/9-cleaning-laundry-and-waste-management/cleaning-after-contamination-by-blood-or-other-bod) in the guidelines for more information.

**Disclaimer**

The information set out in this publication is current at the date of first publication and is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular patients or circumstances. Nor is this publication exhaustive of the subject matter. It is no substitute for individual inquiry. Compliance with any recommendations does not guarantee discharge of the duty of care owed to patients.

The RACGP and its employees and agents have no liability (including for negligence) to any users of the information contained in this publication.

© The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2022

This resource is provided under licence by the RACGP. Full terms are available at www.racgp.org.au/usage/licence

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.

Spills cleaning protocols

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Spot cleaning (very small, well-defined spills that do not require use of spill kit) | Use examination gloves. (If glass suspected, use protective utility gloves and discard them afterwards.)Wipe up spot immediately with a damp cloth, tissue or paper towel.Consider disinfecting according to potential for skin contact with the site and suspected pathogens.Discard contaminated materials and dispose of gloves.Perform hand hygiene. |
| Small spills (up to 10 cm diameter) | Select appropriate personal protective equipment.Wipe up spill immediately with absorbent material.Place contaminated absorbent material into impervious container or plastic bag for disposal.Clean the area with detergent.Wipe the area with [Insert name of TGA-approved disinfectant used in the practice]. Ensure surface remains wet for the required time [insert number of minutes] (reapply if necessary). Allow to dry.Perform hand hygiene. |
| Large spills (> 10 cm diameter) | Select appropriate personal protective equipment.Cover entire area of the spill with an absorbent clumping agent and allow a few seconds to absorbUsing two scoops, lift absorbed material into waste bag placed at the site.Change gloves. if visibly soiled.Clean site with detergent.Remove bag to waste storage area and remove personal protective equipment.Perform hand hygiene.Don fresh gloves.Wipe the area with a suitable disinfectant and allow to dry for the time advised by the product manufacturer.Perform hand hygiene. |

TGA: Therapeutic Drug Administration