



# PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

## Dealing with Fecal Matter

The warm, damp atmosphere of most bathrooms is a perfect breeding ground for germs, such as fecal coliform bacteria. Proper cleaning, especially after an accident, is the first line of defense against transmission of disease.

### Use disposable gloves and a mask

Urine is sterile; fecal matter is not. It is full of intestinal bacteria and germs, such as streptococcus, staphylococcus, E. coli and shigella bacteria, hepatitis A, all of which are easily transmitted via touch or ingestion. If a family member is infected with one of these diseases, you should take extra precaution when cleaning. Use gloves.

If the smell is particularly odorous, you might consider a dust mask to protect yourself from ingesting airborne particles of fecal matter expelled into the air. (Odor molecules and very tiny bits of airborne fecal matter create the smell.) Consider a disposable apron as a way to protect clothing.

### Cleaning Techniques

Clean the matter away as quickly as possible. Generally, cleaning requires a two-step process:

- 1) the use of a disinfectant to kill bacteria and
- 2) the use of a neutralizing treatment or a

cleaning formula that uses enzymes, such as Allsclean's Breakdown and eliminates odors. (Neutralizing treatment removes odors, unlike cleaners which simply mask odors.)

**For stool and smears on soft surfaces:** Pick up the matter with a tissue or glove and deposit in the toilet. Blot the wet area with a paper towel. If you use a paper towel, don't deposit it in the toilet as it may cause clogging. Once most of the matter is removed, spray with a disinfectant and wipe. Spray the area with neutralizing agent.

**For diarrhea and vomit:** Cleaning diarrhea and vomit is generally not easy. Wipe away as much as the matter as possible, then treat it as a smear. An "Instant Absorbent" product, such as made by Kleen Aire, turns liquid messes, including vomit, blood, urine and other liquid messes into manageable gels, which then can be swept or vacuumed. Absorbents save clean up time--- but they only work if you have a container on-hand!

### Cleaning the bathroom

Surprisingly, most bacteria and germs in the bathroom are generated when the toilet is flushed. The flush causes water droplets, many of which are contaminated by fecal matter, to be expelled into the air, where they are deposited throughout the bathroom. Closing the toilet seat prior to flushing is the simplest method of reducing the amount of contamination. Closing the lid is particularly important when dealing with someone who is ill with a cold, the flu or other contagious diseases.

- **Put on gloves.**
- **Spray and wipe:** Spray the toilet, sink and shower with a disinfectant or germicidal cleaner; then go back and wipe.
- **Toilet:** Spray the toilet, especially the top and underside of the seat and the handle regularly. Wipe clean with a paper towel or a specialty cloth towel. Discard the paper towel in trash.
- **Sink:** Contrary to popular belief, the sink generally houses more germs than the toilet. Make sure that you remove toothbrushes and other hygiene items prior to spraying. Better yet, store these items in a cabinet to prevent contamination from toilet spray. Spray the entire area, including the faucet and especially the handles and into the drain
- **Shower and tub:** Spray and clean the walls and tub on a regular basis. After you finish a shower, shake the shower curtain to remove excess water, a breeding ground for bacteria and mold.
- **Sponges:** If you use a sponge, change it every week or two but disinfect it every day. The warm, wet sponge is an ideal breeding ground for germs. To disinfect, rinse in a solution of one ounce of bleach mixed in a quart of water. Another simple technique: wet the sponge and microwave it on high for a minute.
- **After cleaning:** Wash your hands thoroughly with an antibacterial soap.