



When caring for foster animals, remember they may carry unseen diseases. To properly remove contagions, use a two-step cleaning and disinfecting process. Not all disinfectants are equal, so choose an appropriate one and follow directions carefully.

Disinfect all objects and areas they contacted before bringing in new animals. We recommend thorough cleaning between fosters to prevent disease spread. **If your fosters had a contagious illness, we'll provide specific deep-cleaning instructions.**

The difference between cleaning and disinfecting

- **Cleaning** breaks up actual dirt or organic matter. It is the physical removal of dirt and debris. This includes washing bowls, litter boxes or other items with dish soap or other household cleaner, sweeping or vacuuming floors, or wiping away urine or feces. **Cleaning is typically done on a daily basis!**
- **Disinfecting** uses a chemical solution to kill or inactivate germs. The type of germs killed is dependent on the solution and requires a specific contact time in order to be effective. Contact time is the amount of time that the surface must remain visibly wet in order to kill the germs.
 - The most inexpensive, readily available and effective disinfecting product is bleach, which kills most common pathogens, including ringworm. AHS can provide another disinfectant (Rescue) if you would prefer this over bleach or need a disinfectant that is color-safe.

Cleaning and disinfecting process

Step 1 (daily)

- Clean all areas (wipe down hard surfaces, sweep/mop hardwood floors, vacuum carpets/rugs, etc.) with a common household cleaner.
- Make sure all dirt and debris has been thoroughly mopped, wiped, vacuumed or swept away.

Step 2 (every 2 weeks and always before bringing new foster animals home)

- **Option 1:** Using Rescue and water solution diluted 1:8 (4 oz Rescue concentrate per gallon of water), wipe down hard surfaces, mop floors, and spray any carpet or fabric. **Make sure that all surfaces remain visibly wet for 10 minutes.** This will ensure that any remaining ringworm spores are killed. **RESCUE SHOULD NEVER BE MIXED WITH BLEACH PRODUCTS.**
 - Rescue is non-toxic and generally color-safe, but we always recommend a test area to be safe.
- **Option 2:** Using a bleach and water solution diluted at 1:10 (**1 part bleach, 10 parts water**), wipe down hard surfaces and mop floors. **Make sure that all surfaces remain visibly wet for 10 minutes.** Remember to wipe down hard surfaces after ten minutes to remove any residual bleach, as it may be harmful to animals.
 - *Note: Once mixed, the bleach/water solution is only effective for 24 hours and must be protected from light.*

Cleaning foster supplies

Supplies to return to AHS:

Return all supplies (blankets, towels, litter boxes, scoops, toys, carriers, playpens) for sanitizing. This includes unused litter and food (wet/dry). You'll receive fresh supplies with new fosters.

Cleaning Instructions (for all items unless specified):

1. Remove visible debris
2. Fully saturate with either:
 - Bleach and water solution (1:32)
 - Rescue and water solution (4 oz/gallon)
3. Let soak for 10 minutes
4. For bleach-treated items: rinse thoroughly (hose works well outdoors)

Specific Items

Cat Furniture:

- Discard cardboard scratchers between litters
- For cloth towers: vacuum first, then follow standard cleaning above

Soft Items (blankets, towels, toys):

- Remove batteries from toys before washing
- Machine wash with unscented detergent and bleach
- Non-bleachable items: spray with Rescue first, then wash normally
- Avoid using sentimental blankets for fosters

Carpeted Areas:

- Prefer non-carpeted spaces when possible
- If exposed: vacuum, then apply disinfectant solution
- Carpet cleaner machines may be used with properly diluted solutions

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ashevillehumane.org/get-involved/foster/resources

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