

An annual 'big' clean is an opportunity to get to those places that might be neglected during daily or weekly routines.  
By **Murray McDonald**



# Start **spring** with a clean slate

**W**hen it comes to cleaning processes in aged care, regular and thorough work is a must. Daily cleaning of touch points, rooms, bathrooms and high traffic areas are essential in keeping with standards and ensuring patients, visitors and staff are not put at risk of potentially harmful disease and infection.

However, this doesn't mean that a facility wouldn't benefit from an annual spring clean. Such attention can work to ensure that a facility's daily routine cleaning methods are up to standard by paying close attention to key areas and rooms.

Perhaps you will find that particular areas are not being catered for during the daily clean as much as they could be? A thorough spring clean may also allow you to pay attention to areas that aren't a priority but nevertheless do need attention. Overall, an annual spring clean should be top of mind to an industry that prides itself on infection control and cleanliness.

The following key areas are essential to an effective spring clean process for the aged care industry.

## Floor surfaces

Although floor surfaces should be cleaned on a regular basis in an aged care facility, they should also be part of the spring clean process. Floors are one of the main areas that lead to the spread of dirt and bacteria from one room to another, so cleaning various rooms and not floors, will only lead to these rooms fast becoming contaminated once more.

After the winter weather, there will be an increase in soiling and dirt on floors. Giving high traffic floor areas a thorough clean, such as front entrance halls, dining rooms, resident rooms and any other high accident room, will ensure all rooms with high levels of potentially harmful bacteria are sanitised.

Floor surfaces should be mechanically cleaned through a process of washing, scrubbing and finally a flush clean through using a high temperature steam brushing machine. This will eliminate the downtime for waiting on floors to dry, as well as eliminating OH&S hazards such as slippery floors and the creation of damp floors where bacteria like to harbour.

When cleaning floors, remove all objects from the floor. This will allow for all areas of the floor to receive a deep clean. During a facility's routine cleans, these areas of the floor may not receive a thorough clean due to furniture obstructions.

## Bedrooms

Besides carpets, areas such as upholstery and curtains in bedrooms are particularly known for harbouring odours and allergy causing dust and dirt. It's common in daily cleaning routines for beds, carpets and touch points to be the priorities, and areas such as curtains can be overlooked.

Odours in particular are harder to remove if left for a long period of time. Make your spring clean the time to ensure all odour trapping materials are deodorised.

When cleaning drapes and curtains, the time-consuming activity of removing them from the windows doesn't need to occur. Using an appropriate attachment with a steam machine will remove all dust and odours and ensure that your upholstery is getting a deep clean.

One of the most important areas to clean in a bedroom is the bed mattress. Any cleaning process in a bedroom should not overlook a mattress, whether it is during your spring clean or daily clean.

With spring comes the warmer weather, and particularly when residents are resting or sleeping, this will make your mattress the perfect breeding ground for bacteria as it will be more prone to becoming damp or moist from body heat. Using dry steam is the most effective way of eliminating

bacteria and odours. Due to the high temperature of steam vapour, bed bugs and bed-sore causing bacteria can not survive.

## Bathrooms

Bathrooms are one of the main rooms that require daily and effective deep cleaning. Bodily fluids and mould are the biggest cleaning issues specific to bathroom cleaning.

Using high-temperature steam for mould removal is the only cleaning method that will actually remove mould and prevent it from reoccurring. Common methods, such as using chemicals, will clean the mould but the spore will remain. If the spore is not eliminated, not only will the mould continue to grow back but it can lead to respiratory problems in your residents if left unattended.

Detail cleaning is an important part of bathroom cleaning. It allows you to get into the nooks and crannies where bodily fluids and bacteria form. Areas to detail clean include toilet seats, around the toilet bowl,

hinges and the corners of the bathroom where the floor and walls meet.

An area that may be overlooked during daily cleans is the bathroom exhaust fan grills. Take the time and effort during your spring clean to get up to the exhaust fan and vacuum or steam the grills. Just as air-conditioning cleaning is important to avoid the build-up of bacteria that can cause breathing problems; same attention should be paid to the bathroom exhaust fan.

When going about a spring clean, it is important to keep the environment in mind. It is common to see large amounts of water and chemicals used during the cleaning process, however, modern cleaning machines and methods use minimal water and no chemicals. One of the top green friendly ways to clean is by using steam. It can be produced from as little as one litre of water and because of steam's high temperature it effectively removes all bacteria, dirt and grime without the need for chemicals.

Saving on water and chemical waste are not the only elements to ensure a green

clean, but the time it takes you to clean is also important. The longer cleaning takes, the more energy is being used to power the cleaning machines. Ensure your machines are modern, fast yet effective, and you will see you are able to cut your cleaning time in half.

Aged care facilities can benefit from a big spring clean. When a large cleaning effort is made together with a through daily cleaning routine this will ensure that sites are up to the highest standards of cleanliness. With the elderly more susceptible to disease and infection, an opportunity for a deep clean should never be overlooked.

Duplex Cleaning Machines is running a number of free spring cleaning demonstrations via a live broadcast from September through to November. To register your attendance, visit [www.duplexcleaning.com.au](http://www.duplexcleaning.com.au) ■

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