

Bright and Shiny Isn't Necessarily Clean and Safe. Bright, shiny hard surface flooring has often been thought to be easier to clean and sanitize than carpet, and therefore more appropriate to use in environments, such as hospitals, where preventing the spread of infections is desired. But that is a myth that the research shows just isn't true.

Now that Covid-19 has made it clear that infection control, cleanliness, and disinfecting are extremely important in any environment, much can be learned from healthcare design that can help prevent the spread of germs in any commercial space.

Insights on Wellness & Flooring: Infection Control

inform.



Sanitizers reduce bacteria, viruses, or fungi (pathogens) on a surface by at least 99.9%. Disinfectants kill a wider range of pathogens than sanitizers. Cleaners simply remove dirt, soils, and impurities from surfaces. (CDC, 2020)

What is the role of flooring surfaces in the transmission of infection? The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) classifies flooring in healthcare facilities as a "minimal contact" surface, which makes it less likely to spread bacteria, viruses, or fungi (pathogens). Because of Covid-19, there is now greater awareness of the need for infection control in other types of commercial buildings. And since children and adults are more likely to come in contact with the floor in K-12 schools, day care centers, or fitness facilities, the role of carpet in preventing the spread of infections in those types of environments is particularly important.

Why is carpet easier to sanitize than hard surface flooring? Hard surface flooring such as VCT or porcelain tile, harbor higher levels of bacteria than soft flooring surfaces such as carpet, carpet tile, or textile composite flooring. And while hard surface flooring may be easier to clean than soft surface flooring, because of its ability to harbor organisms, hard surface flooring is also more difficult to disinfect or sanitize than carpet. Shiny floors may look clean, but they may still harbor bacteria.

What is the best method for sanitizing carpet? The Environmental Protection Agency has a list of disinfectants that meet its criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the cause of Covid-19. Vital Oxide is the product we recommend for carpet sanitization. Another recommended solution is a 50/50 mix of 3% hydrogen peroxide and water. According to the CDC, 3% hydrogen peroxide is a stable and effective disinfectant against viruses. In addition, UVC-equipped commercial vacuum cleaners have also been found to be effective in reducing microbes on carpet.

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