

Keeping your Wheelchair Clean

Keeping your wheelchair & seating clean is an important factor in trying to stop the spread of Covid-19. Paying attention to the cleanliness of your wheelchair and seating may help to stop the spread of the infection to you, to your family and carers, and to any person coming into contact with your chair and seating.

Daily cleaning

1. Brush off any loose debris and then wipe down the wheelchair with a damp cloth to clean off any visible dirt.
2. Use simple household disinfectants to thoroughly clean surfaces. Pay extra attention to high-touch areas like push rims, brake levers, push handles and armrests.
3. Take care not to wet fabric and electronic components. Do not use pressure hoses or aerosols if at all possible as these tend to spread dirt in the air and they also waste water.
4. Wear gloves when cleaning, and wash your hands when you have finished cleaning.

How can I give my wheelchair and seating a comprehensive, deep clean?

Sometimes it may be necessary to give your wheelchair & seating a major clean. The daily cleaning routine may not be enough when you want to have a spotless, like-new clean for your equipment, particularly at this time of Covid 19

If you cannot do this yourself or with the help of a carer, then you may wish to contact your local Primary Care Occupational Therapist who may be able to arrange to have a wheelchair & seating deep clean carried out by their wheelchair service agent. This may involve having to be without your chair for a period of time, so it is essential that you discuss this with your Occupational Therapist.

If you can carry out the cleaning yourself or with a carer, you should clean the following:

- Frame
- Cushion covers & upholstery
- Wheels, castors
- Armrests
- Brakes

Frame

The best way to clean the frame is to vacuum or brush off any loose dirt, and then use a damp cloth with detergent to wipe away stubborn marks or dirt. Avoid using harsh abrasive cleaners as they may damage the frame and the environment. Pay special attention to areas such as the gaps between the seat cushion and the chair sides and back.

Cushion covers and upholstery

Fabrics tend to gather dust, absorb liquids and retain odours. The best way to clean fabrics is to wash them in a washing machine at 40° or warmer wash cycle, using a standard detergent. If possible let the washed covers drip-dry.

Non-removable covers and fabrics on your wheelchair can be vacuumed and then wiped down with disinfectant wipes or a damp cloth and left to dry.

In the case of accidental spills and stains, cleaning with disinfectant wipes or a damp cloth may help until a machine wash can be completed.

Wheels & Castors

If possible you should clean your wheels, castor wheels & push rims daily or whenever they are dirty. The Covid 19 infection control advice not to touch your hands to your face, mouth, nose or eyes is particularly relevant in relation to spreading dirt or infection from your push rims or wheels to you.

Again you can use a damp cloth with some detergent or disinfectant wipes to clean these parts. It is best not to use any oil-based cleaner on, or near tyres or rims as they may make them slippery and hard to grip.

Axles on wheels and castors tend to attract hair, string and dirt which can affect the performance of your wheelchair. Try to unpick these materials using a sharp tool or pick. This type of cleaning can result in immediate improvements in wheelchair performance and is easier to do often, rather than wait until a lot of material has built-up.

Armrests

Wipe down the armrest pads with a damp cloth and disinfectant. It is possible to achieve a really good clean by removing the armrests and wiping the shields that touch against you or the sides of your seat cushion.

Brakes

Brakes or wheel-locks can gather a lot of dirt from the wheels as they are applied. They are an important safety feature and should be kept clean by removing dirt with warm water and a detergent. If you feel your brakes are not working effectively, contact your Primary Care Occupational Therapist to arrange a service for your wheelchair.

Now, more than ever, we need to pay attention to cleaning to prevent infection and to enjoy the benefits of a clean and safe environment. Our staff work with many wheelchairs and seating systems and need to make sure that they do not cause cross-contamination. You can play your part in this effort by making sure that your wheelchair and seating are clean when you attend appointments at SeatTech.

If you have any questions

If you have any questions, concerns or queries, or any suggestions as to how we could improve the service we provide – either in the context of Covid-19 or more generally – please do not hesitate to contact us at:

Email: seattech@enableireland.ie

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