

Safe Science = Good Science

2/03/2020

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can be the most forgotten fomite. Since they are supposed to protect us we must do the following to prevent them from becoming too contaminated to do their purpose:

- Place lab coats on individual hooks away from personal items, not on top of each other
- Do not reuse disposable gloves, coats, sleeves, and respirators
- Reusable lab coats should be decontaminated regularly or laundered frequently (through a vendor, not at home!)
- Disinfect face shields, eye protection, and respirators daily
- Clean work stations before and after use

Fomite Sites

What is a Fomite?

A **fomite** is an **object** that may be contaminated with infectious organisms such as pathogenic bacteria, virus, or fungi and can transfer the disease to a new host.



Common fomites include doorknobs, light switches, handrails, remote controls, pens, and other items that are frequently touched by different people and that may be infrequently cleaned.

Many infectious agents can survive on fomites for an extended period of time, careful disinfection of such objects prevents cross-infection. Use the recommended disinfectant from the [Biosafety Manual](#). Always check your [Pathogen Safety Data Sheets \(PSDS\)](#) on your specific agents for details.

Avoiding Fomites

To help prevent the spread or contamination of various potential fomites, keep the following in mind:

- **Do not** take your lab notebook, pencils and pens out of the lab. These should be dedicated for **lab use only**.
- **Do not** use any headphones, Ipods, or cellphones while in the lab.
- **Do not** touch your face or apply any chap stick/makeup in the lab.
- **Do not** touch door handles, railings, computers, etc. **with gloves**.
- **Change out** absorbent sheets/table pads weekly or when contaminated.
- **Wash hands** regularly between glove changes and before leaving the lab.