Ice Machines

Ice machines can become a reservoir for mold, bacteria and viruses if the machine is not on a routine cleaning schedule. These pathogens are often introduced by a person using the ice machine and not the machine itself. Although most bacteria do not multiply in ice, they can survive for days or months at low temperatures. Following proper ice handling techniques and cleaning the ice machine regularly will help keep your patients/residents and employees safe.

How is the Splash Zone Determined?

- Avoid bringing used drinkware from patient/resident rooms back to the ice machine. Touching potentially contaminated drinkware and then pressing a dispensing button or lever can spread germs to the machine. Instead, use a fresh, clean cup each time.
- Educate staff to wash hands prior to using the ice machine. Placing hand sanitizer near the machine encourages proper hygiene.
- Limit access to the ice machine. Visitors can inadvertently spread infection by not washing their hands before using the machine or placing a used cup under the lever.
- For cafeterias, dining rooms, or other public areas that have an ice machine or ice bin, provide easy access to hand sanitizer.
- Ice scoops should only be handled once and not stored in the ice bin. When done, the scoop should be stored in a clean container outside of the ice bin.
    - Disinfect the ice scoop at least daily with your facility approved disinfectant. Or, disinfect the scoop by placing it in a commercial dishwashing machine and running it along with dishware.
- Cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing an ice machine will help eliminate mold, bacteria, viruses and other contaminants from the machine's surface and the inside of the bin. Clean the entire exterior of the machine **weekly** to eliminate contaminants.
    - **To clean:**
        - Use soap and water to clean ice machine high-touch surfaces (dispensing button and levers, bin doors, handles, etc.)
        - Rinse the area with water
    - **To disinfect:**
        - Once clean, use an EPA-registered disinfectant on the area
        - Make sure to follow the directions on the label for safe and efficient use (dilution rates, contact times, etc.)
        - After the contact time has elapsed, rinse the area with water
    - **To sanitize:**
        - Use an EPA-registered sanitizer on the surface (**Note:** many disinfectants double as sanitizers at a lower dilution rate)
        - Follow the label instructions for "sanitizing" for safe and efficient use
        - Allow the solution to air dry
- Ensure ice machines are serviced by a professional. Ice machine manufactureres recommend at least two preventative maintenance visits per year from a qualified ice machine tchnician.

MIDWEST QIN-QIO

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