

Cleaning and disinfection of foot spas



Foot spas need thorough cleaning and disinfection to prevent the growth and spread of viruses, bacteria and fungi from one person to another.

About this fact sheet

Foot spas (foot baths with a whirlpool action or water jets) need to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to prevent the growth and spread of disease-causing microorganisms. Microorganisms can grow on moist, unclean, or contaminated surfaces.

Foot spas have been linked to bacterial outbreaks, particularly non-tuberculous mycobacteria, which can cause skin infections and inflammation of the lymph nodes. Poor cleaning and disinfection practices can lead to a build-up of contaminants (dirt, skin, and organic material) in the filters and jets, allowing microorganisms to multiply and recirculate in the foot spa water.

To minimise the spread of infectious diseases, a single-use disposable foot spa liner can be used. Operators need to check clients' feet for signs of broken skin (for example, blisters) or infection (for example, tinea) and if found, the procedure should not be performed.

Foot spas must be cleaned and disinfected between each client and at the end of the day.

How to clean and disinfect a foot spa?

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection.

After each client:

1. Drain the water from the foot spa.
2. Clean the surfaces of the foot spa with detergent and warm water using a clean cloth or single-use towel to remove all contamination.
3. Disinfect by spraying the foot spa with a hospital grade disinfectant.
4. Re-circulating 'air-jet' spas need to be disinfected by circulating clean water and disinfectant following the manufacturer's instructions.
5. After disinfection, wipe the foot spa dry using a clean lint free cloth. A different clean cloth should be used after each new client.

At the end of the day:

1. Remove the foot spa components (inlet jets, filter screen) using gloves and thoroughly scrub the foot spa and components with a brush, warm water and a suitable cleaning agent.
2. Immerse the filter and other components in a hospital grade disinfectant solution for at least 10 minutes.
3. Rinse the foot spa and components with clean water and re-assemble.
4. Re-fill with clean water and disinfectant. For re-circulating 'air-jet' spas the disinfectant solution must be circulated for the contact time set by the manufacturer, or for at least 10 minutes. A longer contact time is more likely to kill bacteria and other disease-causing microorganisms.
5. After disinfecting, drain, rinse and dry.
6. Store the foot spa in a clean, dry and dust free area.
7. Any re-useable cloths should be washed in detergent and hot water and dried thoroughly.

Once a week:

The foot spa and all of its components must be soaked in disinfectant overnight.

Chemical storage

Cleaning products and other chemicals should always be stored in their original containers, with their lids closed, in line with the manufacturer's directions, and work health and safety requirements. A copy of the safety data sheet should be available in the business.

Further advice

- Contact your [local council](#).
- Contact your local [Public Health Unit](#) by calling 1300 066 055.

Further information

The following resources are also available to help skin penetration businesses and practitioners understand the requirements of the *Public Health Act 2010* and Public Health Regulation 2022. Visit our [Skin penetration resources](#) page on the NSW Health website:

Factsheets

- Beauty, body art and skin penetration industries
- Nail treatment businesses

Video

- [NSW Health Foot spa infection control tutorial](#)