

# Laundry Protocols



The NHMRC guidelines for Health Care Settings and the AS/NZS 4146:2000 Laundry Practice Standard are the best practice standards for handling and laundering linens.

## Thermal Disinfection

The AS/NZS laundry standard states that, for thermal disinfection to occur, the temperature of the load must be maintained at a minimum of 65°C for more than 10 minutes or 71°C for more than three minutes. The Centers for Disease Control recommend a minimum of 71°C for 25 minutes. This ensures that any bacteria present in the load are unable to thrive and spread infection.

Commercial linen services have the necessary equipment to meet these standards. However, if your domestic washing machine is unable to wash at these temperatures (for example, a top loader) then alternative, chemical options must be used.

## Chemical disinfection:

On the [EPA List N Tool: COVID-19 Disinfectants](#) database, Quaternary Ammonium is listed as the active ingredient to look for in laundry products. The following are all Quats that may be listed as an active ingredient:

- Benzalkonium chloride
- Benzethonium chloride
- Alkyl dimethyl benzyl ammonium chlorides (C12-16)
- Alkyl dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride (C14 60%, C16 30%, C12 5%, C18 5%)
- Alkyl dimethyl ethylbenzyl ammonium chloride (C12-14)
- Alkyl dimethyl ethylbenzyl ammonium chlorides (C12-18)
- Didecyldimethylammonium chloride
- Dioctyldimethylammonium chloride

Most antibacterial, in-wash additives list one of the above as an active ingredient. You must read and follow the manufacturers' instructions. Most require either pre-wash soak or pre-rinse soak for up to 10 minutes to activate.

### FUN FACT

Water in a residential hot water system is stored at minimum 60° Celsius but plumbing regulations state that temperature coming out of the tap must be reduced to a maximum of 50° Celsius to prevent scalding (recommended 38°). Top loaders can never get to the right temperature in a domestic home to comply with the standards.