Unclogging Toilets and Drains

- Wear a headband light to add light to the area.
- Wear rubber gloves that allow enough tactile sensitivity.
- Use a plunger on clogs that can be broken up. Don't use plungers on large pieces of soap, children's or pet's toys, or toiletries. These cannot be broken up and may get jammed in more tightly. Instead, call a plumber.
- Use an auger, also called a snake, if the clog cannot be cleared with the plunger. Ask for assistance if you are not comfortable using an auger.
- After the clog has been cleared, throw away your gloves and disinfect the work area and plunger.

For sinks, bathtubs, and showers:
- Use a standard plunger.
- Line up the cup of the plunger over the drain. If necessary, use your hands.
- Push on the handle with both hands. If the plunger is sealed over the drain, you'll feel the suction through the handle.
- Slowly push up and down on the handle several times.
- Use more pressure with each push.
- Listen for a sucking sound, and feel the suction as you move the handle.

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- You'll feel and hear when the clog is broken up. Remove the plunger, and check that water exits the drain.
- After the water has exited the drain, run water again in the sink, tub, or shower to make sure the clog has been cleared.
- Repeat the process until the clog is completely cleared.

For toilets:

- Use a flange plunger. (This type plunger has an extra flap, or flange, that extends from the plunger cup.)
- Put the flange part of the plunger in the toilet bowl at an angle. If it attaches to the drain, you'll feel the suction.
- If necessary, use your hands to line up the flange part of the plunger.
- Use the same process for plunging as with sinks, tubs, and shower drains.
- You'll feel and hear when the clog is broken up. Remove the plunger, and check that water exits the drain.
- Flush the toilet to make sure the clog is cleared.
- Repeat the process until the clog is completely cleared.
- Shake out the plunger before disinfecting it, as some water may remain in the cup.