

# High Touch Cleaning



The following cleaning and disinfection practices are recommended to help prevent the spread of germs, influenza and cold viruses, and are largely based on the CDC recommendations.<sup>1</sup>

## Know the Difference Between Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sanitizing

**Cleaning removes germs**, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

**Disinfecting kills germs** on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. Use an EPA-registered disinfectant with efficacy for the results you are trying to achieve, and what the necessary dwell times are to be effective to achieve those results.

**Bleach** only kills germs on clean surfaces or objects. Bleach does not have cleaners as high quality disinfectants do. So to disinfect with bleach you must clean surfaces first then use bleach for any disinfecting claims.

**Sanitizing lowers the number of germs** on surfaces or objects to an acceptable level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process works on objects to lower the risk of spreading infection.

**1. Just Clean.** Do not underestimate the power of simply cleaning to reduce the risk of transmitting the influenza and cold viruses as well as other pathogens. Cleaning removes dirt, soil, and impurities that harbor germs and viruses. Routine cleaning therefore plays a critical role in reducing the spread of these germs and viruses. Just as important, remember cleaning is often a necessary first step in disinfecting a surface, which actually kills the remaining germs.

**2. Clean and Disinfect Frequently Touched Surfaces.** Daily or more frequently clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, carts, custodian equipment, chairs, light switches and plates, and faucet handles. Frequency may be increased when there is a known outbreak. Immediately clean and disinfect surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids (vomit, urine, etc.) or blood. Follow precautions set forth in the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard to avoid contact with the fluid.



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**3. Simply Do Routine Cleaning and Disinfecting.** It's important to match your cleaning and disinfecting activities to the types of germs you want to remove or kill. For example, the flu virus can live and potentially infect a person for a several hours and up to two weeks on surfaces. It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).<sup>2</sup>

**4. Clean and Disinfect Correctly.** Always follow label directions on cleaning products and disinfectants. It is important to note that the directions on most disinfectant products require the surface to first be cleaned if gross soils are present. So in extreme cases a double cleaning and disinfecting may be necessary. Be sure to follow the label directions on the disinfectant for dwell time—the amount of time necessary for the disinfectant to reside on the surface in order to effectively kill the germs. Please be sure to make sure the surface remains wet during the dwell time to properly disinfect and kill the germs.

**5. Label Claims.** When disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, select EPA registered products with label claims indicating the product kills the viruses you are looking to kill. Hospital Grade disinfectants such as Hillyard Vindicator, QT Plus, QT –TB, QT3, ReJuvNal and Non-Acid restroom cleaner are the best line of defense for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.

**6. Use disinfecting wipes on electronic items** that are touched often, such as phones and computers. Pay close attention to the directions for using disinfecting wipes. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of contact time. Make sure that the electronics can withstand the use of liquids for cleaning and disinfecting.

**7. Use Products Safely.** Pay close attention to hazard warnings and directions on product labels and SDSs. Cleaning products and disinfectants may call for the use of gloves or eye protection.

Ensure that custodial staff and others who use cleaners and disinfectants read and understand all instruction labels and understand safe and appropriate use. This might require that instructional materials and training be provided in other languages.

**8. Do not mix cleaners and disinfectants unless the labels indicate it is safe** to do so. Combining certain products (such as chlorine bleach and ammonia cleaners) can result in serious injury or death.

**9. Personal Protective Equipment<sup>3</sup>.** Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash. Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used. Additional PPE might be required based on cleaning/disinfectant products being used. Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area, after cleaning a room or area occupied by ill persons. Wash hands, with soap and water for 20 seconds, immediately after gloves are removed.

1) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

2) <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

3) <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.html>