PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Stay at home, if possible.
- In public spaces, stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Wear a mask in public spaces, especially if indoors.

The most likely way to get the virus is from direct contact with another person who already has it. Practicing social distancing and hand-washing are proven effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

SAFER CLEANING & DISINFECTING

Keep your home safe from COVID-19 and toxic chemicals. Get the facts to help you find safer and effective solutions to protect your health!

WASH YOUR HANDS

- AVAIL washable & fragrance-free soap
- Lather for 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer if soap & water not available

Practicing social distancing and hand-washing are proven effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

KEEP YOUR SURROUNDINGS CLEAN

- Cleaning and general hygiene are great for your overall health.
- Soap/detergent and water are amazingly effective at removing both dirt and germs from surfaces.
- Studies in households of healthy people have found that disinfecting at home does more to reduce illness than cleaning with regular soap & water.

SAFER DISINFECTING

Disinfection can be important where people have compromised immune systems, other vulnerabilities, or are sick with the virus in the home. But disinfecting shouldn’t be the priority strategy for disease prevention in a healthy home – and it should be done with caution.

Did you know?

- To decrease exposure to toxic chemicals, avoid antibacterial & fragranced soap.
- Lather for 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitizer ONLY if soap & water not available.

So Should I Disinfect Too?

"...transmission of novel coronavirus to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented." U.S. CDC

In order for disinfectants to work properly, surfaces must be clean of grime, and remain wet for the duration of the disinfectant’s wait-time (these can average anywhere from 30 sec. to 10 min.).

If you choose to disinfect in your home, these disinfectants are safer AND effective at killing COVID-19:

- Alcohol/ethanol/isopropanol
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Lactic acid
- Citric acid and thymol

Look for disinfectants with active ingredients such as:

- alcohol/ethanol/isopropanol
- hydrogen peroxide
- lactic acid
- citric acid
- thymol

Commonly found quats are:

- Quaternary ammonium compounds (quats)
- Chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite)

Both are extremely potent chemicals, and both can pose health hazards

Quats are present in many consumer products and can cause irritation and dermatitis.

Quats can irritate the lungs leading to breathing problems.

Cleaning workers exposed regularly to quats have developed occupational asthma.

Quats are linked to reproductive harm, potentially affecting fertility, and possibly leading to birth defects.

Commonly found quats in household products usually include “…onium chloride” in their names.

Examples of commonly found quats are:

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

Commonly found quats are:

- Quaternary ammonium compounds (quats)
- Chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite)

Both are extremely potent chemicals, and both can pose health hazards

Health Hazards of Quats:

- Quats are potent skin irritants and can cause rashes and dermatitis.
- Quats can irritate the lungs leading to breathing problems.
- Cleaning workers exposed regularly to quats have developed occupational asthma.
- Quats are linked to reproductive harm, potentially affecting fertility, and possibly leading to birth defects.
- Quats are contributing to the global problem of antimicrobial resistance which is an ongoing public-health challenge that cannot be controlled with antibiotics.

Health Hazards of Chlorine Bleach (sodium hypochlorite):

- Chlorine bleach is a strong acid and eye irritant.
- Extended chlorine bleach exposure can cause chemical burns on skin.
- It is the leading cause of chemical eye injuries in children in the U.S. in the category of cleaning products.
- It is also the leading cause of calls to Poison Control for the category of cleaning products, resulting in the greatest number of moderate to severe health outcomes.

REFERENCES

For additional resources, science, studies and more on COVID-19, cleaning products and your health, visit womensvoices.org

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS IN DISINFECTANTS TO AVOID

Quaternary ammonium compounds (quats) and Chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite) are both extremely potent chemicals, and both can pose health hazards

DIY Hand sanitizer recipe:

2 parts isopropyl alcohol or ethanol + 1 part aloe vera gel or vegetable glycerin (It may not have the same consistency as storebought hand sanitizer -- more watery -- but it will be effective.)

Hand sanitizer is not necessary in the majority of situations. It’s only advisable if soap & water are not available.

In order for disinfectants to work properly, surfaces must be clean of grime, and remain wet for the duration of the disinfectant’s wait-time (these can average anywhere from 30 sec. to 1 min.).