



SAFER CLEANING & DISINFECTING at home in the times of CORONAVIRUS

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

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.

WASH YOUR HANDS

- AVOID antibacterial & fragranced soap
- Lather for 20 seconds
- Use hand-sanitizer **ONLY** if soap & water not available

KEEP YOUR SURROUNDINGS CLEAN

Did you know?

Studies in households of healthy people have never found that disinfecting at home does more to reduce illness than cleaning with regular soap & water.



- 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.

How to clean surfaces with soap and water: Put 1-2 tsp dish soap in a spray bottle or squirt bottle with water. Spray or squirt on surface and rub with a clean cloth.

- To decrease exposure to toxic chemicals, **avoid antibacterial soaps**, and cleaners with **dyes** or **fragrances**.
- Prioritize cleaning high-touch areas like doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, keyboards, faucets, and sinks.

So Should I Disinfect Too?

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**.

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

U.S. CDC

SAFER DISINFECTING

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

Look for disinfectants with active ingredients such as:

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



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.)

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS in DISINFECTANTS TO AVOID

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 your 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.
- Widespread use of quats is contributing to the global problem of antimicrobial resistance, leading to the development of "superbugs" that cannot be controlled with antibiotics.



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)
- Didecylmethylammonium chloride

Health Hazards of Chlorine Bleach (sodium hypochlorite):

- Chlorine bleach is a significant lung 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

REMEMBER

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.).

