



Protecting yourself from Influenza and other respiratory infections

Cleaning and disinfecting your home

Routine cleaning removes dirt, soil, grease and other impurities from surfaces in your home. However, when cleaning with soap or detergent alone you will not destroy harmful bacteria or viruses. In order to kill bacteria and viruses, a disinfectant must be used. To make your home as safe as possible from bacteria and viruses that cause people to be sick, you need to both clean **and** disinfect. The recommendations below are good practices at all times.

What product should I use?

The easiest and fastest way to clean and disinfect your home is to choose a product that does both. There are many products that contain both a cleaner and disinfectant. Products should contain sodium hypochlorite, quaternary ammonium, or hydrogen peroxide in sufficient quantities to kill 99.99% of bacteria and viruses that are harmful to people. Read the label of the cleaner/disinfectant you intend to use to see whether it contains one of these ingredients, and if it claims to be able to kill 99.99% of "germs".

An alternative to choosing a product that both cleans and disinfects is to first clean with a soap or detergent, and then disinfect surfaces where bacteria or viruses are most likely to be found with a disinfectant.

Where should I disinfect?

Many people clean their home on a regular schedule. To help prevent the spread of respiratory infections maintain your cleaning schedule and add a disinfection step if you are not already using a product which both cleans and disinfects.

You should pay the most attention to those areas where viruses and bacteria are likely to be found.

Sinks, toilets, showers, bathtubs, and laundry machines should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

Kitchen and bathroom counter tops, and surfaces and objects that are touched by many people on a daily basis should be cleaned and disinfected often. These include:

- hand rails
- bedside tables
- children's toys
- door knobs
- phones
- light switches
- soap dispensers
- toilet handles, paper towel and toilet paper dispensers
- computer or electronic equipment (e.g., mouse and keyboard, remote controls)
- kitchen, coffee and end tables
- any other equipment or fixtures that are handled or touched often

If someone in your home is sick, or if you are doing something which requires extra cleaning (e.g., preparing and cooking a turkey), more frequent disinfection may be required.

You should also clean and disinfect more frequently if you have young children, or if you work in a job where you're exposed to a lot of people who may be ill (e.g., a doctor's office) or you are in regular, close contact with the public.

When in doubt, disinfect!

How should I clean?

- Use a broom or vacuum to remove dirt and debris from floors and stairs.
- Wet mop floors and stairs as needed; disinfect floors regularly.
- Take care of mop heads by rinsing with clear water and letting them dry; clean the mop heads after every use.

- Disinfect commonly used fixtures and equipment often, or when visibly soiled.
- Clean and disinfect other fixtures, furniture and equipment on a regular basis.
- Disinfect waste baskets as needed.

An easy way to prepare a disinfectant solution is to mix 1 part bleach to 100 parts water (e.g., 10 ml bleach in 1 liter water). It is better to prepare a solution with the disinfectant, dip your cloth or sponge into the solution, and then wipe it onto the surfaces you want to disinfect. Spraying products may damage expensive furniture or expensive equipment, like computers.

Some cleaning products will damage surfaces – when in doubt, check with a janitorial supply store. Always wear rubber gloves when handling disinfectants.

Additional precautions to take if someone in your home is sick

- Line the garbage bin used by the sick person with a plastic bag, so you do not need to touch the contents. The ideal garbage bin has a foot pedal, so that you do not need to touch the garbage to put something in the bin, or take out the bag.
- Clean and disinfect doorknobs, light switches, and other hard surfaces that are frequently touched by an ill person at least once a day to help prevent spread of the illness to other members of your home.