

# Cleaning versus Disinfecting

Now, more than ever, it is important to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces including doorknobs, handles, chair backs, faucets, light switches, etc. Cleaning simply means to remove germs or dirt from a surface. Cleaning does not kill germs. It lowers the amount of germs present on a surface by removing them. Disinfecting means to kill germs by using chemicals such as bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, or other EPA registered household disinfectants.

People can lower their risk of getting sick by first cleaning surfaces and then disinfecting them. When cleaning, use soaps or detergents and water to physically remove dirt and germs from surfaces. Follow by disinfecting. If you don't have an EPA-registered household disinfectant on hand, you can make your own. Start with regular, unscented bleach, and wear protective gloves. Mix 5 tablespoons bleach to one gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach to one quart of water. Only use bleach solutions if appropriate for the surface. Do not use on soft surfaces such as carpet, furniture, drapes, or clothing.

Best practices include cleaning all visible dirt from surfaces or objects and following with disinfection. EPA-registered household disinfectants are commonly available in sprays and wipes. You can find them at large retailers including grocery stores, hardware stores, drug stores, and many convenience stores. Be sure to follow all instructions on the label. The label will tell you whether you need to dilute the product, what surfaces you can use it on, drying time, and any precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure there is good ventilation when using the product.

## Reference:

Centers for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html#How%20to%20Clean%20and%20Disinfect>

## Source:

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