



# Safer Disinfectant Use During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Using disinfectants on surfaces in your home or workplace can kill disease causing germs (bacteria and viruses), **but they may also have health risks.** For example, many common disinfectants (like bleach, many disinfectant wipes) have chemicals in them that can cause or worsen asthma.



## If no one is sick at home:

**Clean surfaces in your house** with an all-purpose cleaner or soap, and a microfiber cloth (available online, in grocery stores and at big box stores). This will get rid of most of the germs on a surface and avoids excess exposure to disinfectants.

**Disinfect after cleaning** surfaces that you touch when returning from the outdoors, prior to washing hands.

## If someone in your house is sick or suspected to be sick:

**Clean surfaces, then disinfect** with a product on *both* EPA lists: [Design for the Environment antimicrobial pesticides](#) and [N: Disinfectants](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2.

### Look for these safer active ingredients:

- ▶ Citric Acid
- ▶ Hydrogen Peroxide
- ▶ L-lactic acid
- ▶ Ethanol
- ▶ Isopropanol
- ▶ Peroxyacetic acid
- ▶ Sodium Bisulfate.

**Apply to the surface and leave glistening wet** for the time listed on the product label.

## If you can't access safer products

**If you don't have access to a microfiber cloth**, wash sponges or towels after every surface cleaned:

- ▶ **Clean sponges** by
  - washing in the dishwasher, or
  - soaking for one minute in 1/2 teaspoon of bleach, or
  - microwaving **non-metallic**, soaking wet sponges for one minute.

- ▶ **Wash towels** in a basin or washing machine.

**If you only have access to bleach** or quaternary ammonia-based disinfectants:

- ▶ **Dilute disinfectants** per the package instructions;
- ▶ **Do not combine disinfectants;** and
- ▶ Be sure to **ventilate the area** as well as possible (open windows, turn on fans).



**Find out more, download our detailed safer disinfecting factsheet [here](#).**

**See disclaimer on detailed safer disinfecting factsheet.**



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