Cleaning and Disinfecting your Home

Everyday Steps and Extra Steps When Someone is Sick

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<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>

## What you need to know

• Wear reusable or disposable gloves for routine cleaning and disinfection.

• Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant.

• Clean or launder items according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.

• If someone is sick, keep a separate bedroom and bathroom for the person who is sick (if possible).

## How to clean and disinfect

• Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect and discard after use or use reusable gloves that are dedicated only for cleaning and disinfecting. Always wash hands after removing gloves.

• Clean any dirty surfaces using soap and water first, then use disinfectant.

• Clean or launder items according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

• Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.

• If someone is sick, keep a separate bedroom and bathroom for the person who is sick (if possible).

• Disinfect with a household disinfectant on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19).

• Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Read EPA’s infographic on how to use these disinfectant products safely and effectively. Many products recommend:

\_ Keeping surface wet with disinfectant for a period of time (see product label)

\_ Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation while using the product

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**Use chemical disinfectants safely! Always read and follow the directions on the label** of cleaning and disinfection products to ensure safe and effective use.

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• Wear gloves and consider glasses or goggles for potential splash hazards to eyes

• Ensure adequate ventilation (for example, open windows)

• Use only the amount recommended on the label

• Use water at room temperature for dilution (unless stated otherwise on the label)

• Label diluted cleaning solutions

• Store and use chemicals out of the reach of children and pets

• Do not mix products or chemicals

• Do not eat, drink, breathe, or inject cleaning and disinfection products into your body or apply directly to your skin as they can cause serious harm

• Do not wipe or bathe pets with any cleaning and disinfection products.

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See EPA’s Six Steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use.

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Special considerations should be made for people with asthma. Some cleaning and disinfection products can trigger asthma. Learn more about reducing your chance of an asthma attack while disinfecting to prevent COVID-19.

Picture: Cleaning with spray detergent, rubber gloves and dish cloth on work surface

Caption: Wear gloves and make sure there is good ventilation when using the disinfectant

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If products on Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19) are not available, bleach solutions can be used for many non-porous surfaces and will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

• Most household bleach contains 5%–9% sodium hypochlorite. Do not use a bleach product if the percentage is not in this range or is not specified. This includes some types of laundry bleach or splashless bleach, which are not appropriate for disinfection.

• Follow the directions on the bleach bottle for preparing a diluted bleach solution. If your bottle does not have directions, you can make a bleach solution by mixing:

\_ 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of room temperature water or

\_ 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of room temperature water

• Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for the surface application. If instructions are not available, leave the diluted bleach solution on the surface for at least 1 minute before removing or wiping. This is known as the “contact time” for disinfection. The surface should remain visibly wet during the contact time.

• Ensure proper ventilation during and after application (for example, open windows).

• Never mix household bleach (or any disinfectants) with any other cleaners or disinfectants. This can release vapors that may be very dangerous to breathe in.

• Make a new diluted bleach solution daily. Bleach solutions will not be as effective after being mixed with water for over 24 hours.

## Soft (porous) surfaces

Picture: Beautiful woman cleaning

Caption: For carpet, clean and disinfect affected area, vacuum as usual

• **Clean the surface using soap and water** or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.

• **Launder items** (if possible) according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.

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• Disinfect with a household disinfectant on EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19).

• **Vacuum as usual**.

## Electronics

Picture: man splashes on smartphone a sanitizer to disinfect and prevent viral diseases. Antibacterial antimicrobial agent for killing microbes. Cleaning agent for cleaning.

Caption: Follow manufacturer’s instruction for cleaning electronics

For electronics, such as phones, tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls:

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• Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics, which makes cleaning and disinfecting easier.

• Follow manufacturer’s instructions and recommendations for cleaning.

• For electronic surfaces that can be cleaned or disinfected, use a product on EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19). Many of the products for electronics contain alcohol because it dries quickly.

## Laundry

For clothing, towels, linens and other items that go in the laundry:

• To minimize the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air, **do not shake dirty laundry.**

**• Wear disposable gloves** when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.

• Launder items according to the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible**, use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely**.

• Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people’s items.

• Clean and **disinfect clothes hampers** according to guidance above for surfaces.

**• Wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol** after handling dirty laundry.

## Clean hands often

Picture: Someone washing their hands

Caption: Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds

• Follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, including **washing hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands. It is especially important to wash hands:

\_ After blowing one’s nose, coughing, or sneezing.

\_ Before and after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

\_ After using the restroom.

\_ Before and after entering or leaving a public place.

\_ Before and after touching your mask.

\_ After changing a diaper.

\_ Before eating or preparing food.

\_ After touching animals or pets.

\_ After caring for an ill person.

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**Hand sanitizer**: If soap and water are not readily available and hands are not visibly dirty, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.

• Always read and follow the directions on the label to ensure safe and effective use.

• Keep hand sanitizers away from fire or flame.

• Do not use hand sanitizer for children under six years of age without adult supervision.

• Always store hand sanitizer out of reach of children and pets.

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See CDC's Hand Sanitizer Use Considerations

## HVAC, ventilation, and filtration

Ventilation and filtration provided by heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems can reduce the airborne concentration of the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2), which can reduce the risk of transmission through the air.

• Check to be sure your HVAC filter is correctly in place and consider upgrading the filter to the highest-rated filter that your system can accommodate (consult your HVAC manual or an HVAC professional for details).

• HVAC systems only filter the air when the fan is running, so run the system fan for longer times, or continuously. Many systems can be set to run the fan even when no heating or cooling is taking place.

• When used properly, air purifiers can help reduce airborne contaminants, including viruses, in a home or confined space.

• Improve ventilation with outside air to improve indoor air quality:

\_ Open the windows, or screened doors, if possible.

\_ Open the outdoor air intake or vent of your window air conditioner when in operation.

\_ Operate a bathroom fan when the bathroom is in use or continuously, if possible.

\_ Avoid these actions when outdoor air pollution is high or when it makes your home too cold, hot, or humid.

 • Care should be taken with portable ventilation equipment such as fans, to minimize air blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses.

• Running your HVAC system, using an air purifier or a portable air cleaner, and increasing ventilation **are not enough** to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19. Continue to follow other prevention guidelines.

• Use of ozone generators in occupied spaces is **not** recommended. They do not effectively remove viruses, bacteria, mold, or other biological pollutants when operated at concentrations within public health standards.

## When someone is sick

### Bedroom and bathroom

Picture: Young sick man in bed cleaning snotty nose

Caption: Keep a separate bedroom and bathroom for a person who is sick

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Keep a **separate bedroom and bathroom for a person who is sick** (if possible).

• The person who is sick should stay separated from other people in the home (as much as possible).

• **If you have a separate bedroom and bathroom**: Wear disposable gloves and only clean the area around the person who is sick when needed, such as when the area is soiled. This will help limit your contact with the person who is sick.

\_ Caregivers can **provide personal cleaning supplies** to the person who is sick (if appropriate). Supplies include tissues, paper towels, cleaners, and EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19). If they feel up to it, the person who is sick can clean their own space.

**• If you don’t have a separate bedroom and bathroom**: The person who is sick should clean and disinfect after each use. If this is not possible, the caregiver should wait as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting.

• See precautions for household members and caregivers for more information.

### Food

**• Eat separately**: The person who is sick should eat (or be fed) in their room if possible.

**• Wash dishes and utensils using disposable gloves and hot water**: Handle any used dishes, cups/glasses, or silverware with gloves. Wash them with soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.

• Clean hands after taking off gloves or handling used items.

### Trash

Picture: teenage girl in quarantine, wearing protective mask and gloves, in her hands she carries two garbage bags

Caption: Use disposable gloves when handling and disposing of trash

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• **Dedicated, lined trash can**: If possible, dedicate a lined trash can for the person who is sick. Use disposable gloves when removing garbage bags, and handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands afterwards.

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases [[\*sk1\*]]