

Cleaning and Disinfection of Food-Contact and Touch Surfaces for the COVID-19 VIRUS



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 may remain viable for several hours on different types of surfaces. However, the transmission of the virus from a surface to a person has not been documented. The spread of the COVID-19 virus occurs most frequently through close person-to-person contact — within about 6 feet — from either direct contact or respiratory droplets from coughs or sneezes. Following proper environmental and cleaning programs will limit the survival of the COVID-19 virus on surfaces.

Cleaning alone would remove most of the germs and dirt from surfaces that people touch or that contact food. **Disinfection** after cleaning will kill the remaining germs of the cleaned surface. Follow CDC guidelines for facilities visited by people suspected of having COVID-19 or who have been confirmed as having the disease.

BEST PRACTICES:

Visibly dirty surfaces should first be cleaned and then disinfected; otherwise, the chemicals will not be effective against the virus.

1. Clean and sanitize all areas that could be touched.
2. Prioritize routine cleaning operations for frequently touched objects, such as harvesting tools, packing containers, surfaces that contact food, produce storage refrigerators, lockers, doorknobs, trash cans and any areas that are accessed often.
3. Use a sanitizer registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in your cleaning and sanitizing practices and properly follow the label instructions for concentration, application method and contact time. *EPA-registered disinfectant products for the COVID-19 virus on the [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 list](#) have qualified under the EPA emerging viral pathogen program for use against the COVID-19 virus.*

4. For use in food or surfaces that contact food, it is also important to always check label guidelines to see if the disinfectant is safe and recommended as a food-grade product.

How to clean surfaces:

1. First, clean dirty surfaces using a detergent or soap and water before disinfection.
2. For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions and alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol as well as other common EPA-registered household disinfectants can be used against coronaviruses.

How to prepare a bleach solution

Follow the manufacturer's direction for application and proper ventilation. The CDC recommends the following method to prepare an effective bleach solution:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water
- or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water



Use clean containers.

If you need to prepare a specific concentration of bleach solution, the information detailed below can be helpful:

Assuming a concentration of 5.25% hypochlorite in chlorine bleach, use the following volumes to achieve a concentration of chlorine at 65 to 400 parts per million.

Amount of chlorine bleach/gallon	Chlorine strength (ppm)
1 teaspoon (5 mL)	65
1 tablespoon (15 mL)	200
1 fluid ounce (30 mL)	400

Calculations:

$$\text{volume of bleach} = \frac{\text{desired strength of chlorine in wash water} \times \text{volume of wash water}}{\text{concentration of bleach}}$$

To note, 1% = 100 ppm, 1 gallon = 768 teaspoons

For example, if we want to make a 100 ppm sanitizing solution in 1 gallon of wash water using Clorox bleach with a concentration of 5.25% hypochlorite:

$$\text{volume of bleach} = \frac{\left(\frac{100}{10,000} \right) \% \times 1 \text{ gallon}}{5.25\%}$$

$$\text{volume of bleach} = 0.0019 \text{ gallon}$$

$$\text{volume of bleach} = 0.0019 \times 768 \text{ teaspoons} \sim 1.5 \text{ teaspoons}$$

Cleaning up after an infected individual has been in the facility

1. Close off areas used by any ill people and wait as long as practical before cleaning and disinfecting. If possible, wait until 24 hours.
2. Cleaning personnel should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all cleaning tasks and discard the disposable items properly after completing the work. Then they should wash their hands. In cases where soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer with 60% to 95% alcohol may be used.
3. Soft, porous surfaces, like carpeted floor or rugs, should be cleaned first to remove visible contamination and then laundered with the warmest appropriate water setting. They should then be allowed to dry completely.

REFERENCES:

[CDC. Environment cleaning and recommendations.](#)

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