



Cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces for the prevention of COVID-19 in residential or community settings

Definitions

Surface cleaning refers to the removal of dirt and microorganisms from a surface. Cleaning alone does not kill all microorganisms, but reduces their number and the risks of spreading the infection.

Surface disinfection is done using chemicals to kill microorganisms. Killing remaining microorganisms on a surface after cleaning reduces the risk of spreading the infection.

Things to remember

Areas where infected people have been staying for several hours should be treated as though the virus is on every surface. Cleaning and disinfection procedures should be maximized.

- It's recommended to close off access to areas used by infected people and to wait at least three hours before starting to clean and disinfect.
- If possible, open windows to air out the affected area.
- This waiting period will allow a certain level of viral inactivation on surfaces to be reached.
- Surfaces most frequently touched by occupants are more likely to be contaminated.
- The usual cleaning and disinfectant products are effective against the virus (see Health-Canada's list for COVID-19 below). Always follow manufacturer's instructions. For most household disinfectants, we have to allow the surface to remain wet for 10 minutes and then wipe. If you don't have any disinfectant, you can also use diluted bleach (sodium hypochlorite diluted from 0.1% to 0.5%), ethanol (between 62-71%) or even hydrogen peroxide (0.5%). The preparation method for a 0.1% bleach solution is: 4 teaspoons or 20 mL of domestic bleach in 1 liter of water, or 1 cup or 250 mL of bleach in 2.8 gallons or 12.6 L of water. The diluted bleach solution must be used within 24 hours or discarded.
- For porous surfaces, such as carpets and curtains, remove any visible contamination when present and clean with the appropriate cleaning product indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning, if items can be washed, wash them according to the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, use the warmest water setting appropriate for these items, then completely dry afterwards.

Clothes and other items that go into the laundry should be washed using warm water if possible:

- Place dirty laundry (e.g. sheets, towels, and clothing) in a fabric or plastic bag.
- Empty these bags into the washer.
- Avoid shaking the laundry or bag when placing laundry in the washer.
- Avoid contact of your skin and clothes with this contaminated laundry.
- Laundry can be washed with other members of the household's laundry, using the usual laundry soap. If clothes are very dirty (e.g. vomit), they must be cleaned extra careful beforehand or washed separately.

The person's dishes and utensils should be washed after use with soap and water. The use of a dishwasher is also suitable.

Tissues and disposable material used by the person should be thrown in a bin with a bag (ideally with a lid). Close the bag before placing it in the garbage box outside.

Appropriate protection measures for cleaning

- Wear waterproof gloves to protect your hands when cleaning.
- Wash your hands and forearms with soap and water when the gloves are removed.
- After cleaning, gloves that are washable should be thoroughly washed with water and detergent and then dried or discarded and replaced with a new pair if necessary.
- Hand washing should be done before and after wearing gloves.
- Remove your clothes and wash them once the cleaning operations have been completed.

Authorized disinfectants that may be used against the virus that causes COVID-19

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

Adapted and translated from *COVID-19*:

Nettoyage de surfaces, Institut national de santé publique du Québec, last update April 15, 2020, available at : <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/covid-19/environnement/nettoyage-surfaces>