

Safer cleaning & COVID-19 Outreach Guide

Cleaning & disinfecting for a healthy home

This guide will help you increase awareness about disinfecting for novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and other germs as you educate about safer cleaning practices. It will also help you answer common questions about safer cleaning practices as you do outreach.

What local health experts recommend

Public Health-Seattle & King County recommends everyone take steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially to protect those who are more vulnerable. The steps you take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent COVID-19.

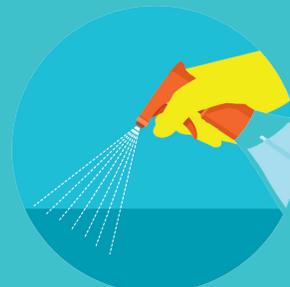
- Wash hands often with soap and water. (If not available, use hand sanitizer)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces like tables, doorknobs, faucets, desks, and sinks with household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants.



Wash hands often



Cover coughs & sneezes



Clean & disinfect

How to talk about safer cleaning & disinfecting

Explain the difference between cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing

Cleaning involves the removal of germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces. It works by using soap, detergent, water, and friction to physically remove dirt and germs from surfaces. Cleaning surfaces alone does not kill all germs, but can reduce the number of germs.

Disinfecting and sanitizing involves using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. It works by chemical action when used as the label directs. Disinfecting alone does not clean dirty surfaces or remove all germs.

Key points:

- Cleaning surfaces before disinfecting can further lower the risk of spreading infection.
- Disinfectant products must be EPA-registered.

Encourage adopting safer cleaning practices by talking about the benefits

Many cleaning supplies and household products contain chemicals that can irritate the eyes or throat, cause headaches, and bring on other health problems. This is due to breathing in fumes from products like bleach or absorbing chemicals in your skin. Switching to a safer cleaning method can help avoid these health risks and protect everyone in your home.

Key points:

- Some cleaners, especially ammonia and bleach, form a toxic gas when mixed.
- Breathing fumes from bleach can increase your chance of an asthma attack. (if preexisting)
- Other health problems include dermatitis and other skin problems.

Talk about the health risks



Irritated Skin



Headache



Irritated Eyes



Asthma
(If preexisting)

Safer cleaning practices people can easily adopt

First, what is safer cleaning?

Safer cleaning refers to using cleaning methods and products with less toxic ingredients designed to preserve human health and environmental quality.

Use less toxic cleaning products

Avoid products with the words CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER, or POISON on the label. These contain toxic chemicals harmful to your health. Instead select products labeled EPA "Safer Choice" or "Cradle to Cradle." These products are less toxic and pose less risk to your health. Read the labels as you pick your products and know what they mean.

- Safest are products with an EPA Safer Choice logo on the front or back.
- Safe enough are products that don't have the words CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER, or POISON on the label.
- Somewhat harmful are products with the words CAUTION or WARNING on the label.
- Most harmful are products with the words DANGER, or POISON on the label. These should be avoided.

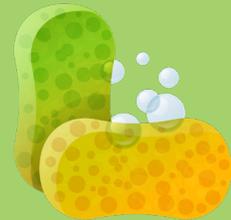
Make your own cleaning product

You can make household cleaners from common ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, dish soap, and water.

These can be combined and used to clean most surfaces in your home. Check out safer cleaning recipes available from Hazardous Waste Management Program by visiting hazwastehelp.org.

Tools for safer cleaning

Use water or a less toxic cleaning product with these to clean most surfaces.



Sponge



Microfiber Cloth



Drain Cleaning Tool



Scrub Brush

Disinfecting for COVID-19 and other germs

You can use safer cleaning practices in combination with disinfecting for COVID-19 and other germs. Always follow guidelines recommended by local and national health authorities. Before sharing COVID-19, or any disease prevention information, check your local Public Health to make sure you have the most up to date information.

First, what is COVID-19?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus strain spreading from person-to-person. It is currently in the United States and many other countries. Health experts are concerned because this new virus has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people — especially people over age 60 or who have weakened immune systems.

How does COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning more about the spread. Currently, it is thought to spread:

- through respiratory droplets when an
- infected person coughs or sneezes
- between people who are in close contact with
- one another (within about 6 feet)
- by touching a surface or object with the virus
- and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes

How do I kill the germ in my home safely?

Follow these guidelines:

- Use an EPA-registered disinfectant to ensure it is effective for killing germs.
- Less toxic disinfectants are still effective. Look for products with the word **CAUTION** on the label. Other less toxic options include products that contain ethanol, isopropanol (isopropyl alcohol), hydrogen peroxide, L-lactic acid, and citric acid.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning products and disinfectants.

Clean before you disinfect

1.

Start with cleaning

Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Start by using soap, your less toxic cleaning solution, water and friction to physically remove dirt and germs from surfaces.

2.

Put on protective wear

Take steps to protect your skin and eyes by wearing gloves and some form of eye protection, preferably safety glasses. Protect your lungs by opening windows to give yourself fresh air.

3.

After cleaning disinfect

Disinfecting destroys almost all infectious germs, when used as the label directs. It has no effect on dirt, soil, or dust. After cleaning, use an EPA-registered disinfectant. Wipe down those surfaces again.

Outreach Resources

Online information

For safer cleaning and disinfectant tips visit

Hazardous Waste Management Program of King County
Hazwastehelp.org

For COVID-19 updates and resources for King County visit

Public Health-Seattle & King County
www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health

For information about disinfectant for use against COVID-19 visit

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
www.epa.gov/coronavirus

For more information about products with less toxic ingredients visit

Responsible Purchasing Network
https://osha.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Updated%20Safer%20Disinfectants%20List_March%2026%2C%202020.pdf

Program print publications

Educational handouts are available through Hazardous Waste Management Program to help with outreach. Request materials by contacting Julia Singer at julia.singer@kingcounty.gov.

Titles:

- Some Cleaners Can Harm Your Family's Health
- How Can I buy a Household Product that is Safer for My Family?
- Safer Cleaning Recipe Card



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