

# CLEANING & DISINFECTING FOR COVID-19

## How to clean your house to help keep your family healthy

### THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19

- COVID-19 is caused by a virus (coronavirus)
- The virus can live on surfaces for several days
- Ways we normally clean may not kill the virus
- You should first **clean**, then **disinfect**
- Choose a disinfectant that will kill the virus
- Cleaners can hurt you if not used safely

### PROTECT YOURSELF WHEN CLEANING

- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after cleaning.
- Wear a mask and glasses to protect from the virus and chemicals.
- Wear disposable gloves; do not touch your face.
- Open a window and turn on fans when cleaning.
- Always follow directions on product labels.
- Store all products safely away from children.

## CLEAN, THEN DISINFECT

**Cleaning** removes germs and dirt from surfaces, but cleaning does not kill germs.

**Disinfecting** uses chemicals to kill germs, and works best on clean surfaces.

It is important to **clean, then disinfect**, to get rid of the virus.

## TIPS FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

**Cleaning hard surfaces (tables, doorknobs, sinks, faucets, toilets)**

- **Clean** using soap or household cleaner, **then disinfect**.
- It is most important to **disinfect things people touch often**.

### Laundry

- Carry sick person's laundry in a plastic bag.
- **DO NOT** shake **laundry** before washing.
- Wash clothes in **hot water** and dry completely.

### Electronics (phones, keyboards, remote controls)

- Put a clear wipeable cover on device so cleaners don't harm electronics.
- Wipe **with 70% rubbing alcohol and dry completely**.

### Soft items (wallets, rugs, couches, curtains)

- If possible, wash with soap and water
- Or, disinfect with fabric-safe product or hydrogen peroxide.

### Groceries and shopping

- Use curbside pickup if you can.
- If you go in a store: wear a mask, disinfect cart, don't touch your face, wash your hands after.
- Groceries are not thought to be a big risk, but you can choose to:
  - Throw out packaging or wipe with disinfectant.
  - Rinse fruits and vegetables with water.
  - Leave non-perishable items out for a few days before touching.

**For more information** on cleaning and COVID-19, visit [virussafehousekeeping.urmc.edu](http://virussafehousekeeping.urmc.edu) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html)

# SAFER DISINFECTING

- Especially if someone in the house is sick, **disinfect things they may touch** or breathe on.
- Disinfectants can kill the virus, but they **must be used correctly**.
- Disinfectants **can cause breathing problems**, asthma attacks, skin burns, or poisoning.
- If you purchase a disinfecting product, check to make sure it kills coronavirus.\*
- Or use **Hydrogen Peroxide, Isopropyl (Rubbing) Alcohol, or diluted Bleach** to disinfect.

## DISINFECTANTS ARE POISONS



**If someone swallows bleach or another disinfectant, or has breathing or skin problems, call:**  
**Poison Control Center (800) 222-1222**

## HOW TO DISINFECT

- **Wet** the surface with disinfectant.
- Use a **cloth**, not a sponge.
- If you use a **spray bottle**, set for **“stream,”** not **“mist”** so you don’t breathe it in.
- Make sure the surface **stays wet for 5 minutes**.
- Rinse well.
- Wipe or let air dry.

\*Products that can disinfect for COVID-19 and are registered for use in New York are listed at:

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials\\_minerals\\_pdf/covid19.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/covid19.pdf)

# WHAT TO DISINFECT WITH

**Buy a disinfecting cleaner\* or you can use:**

- 3% Hydrogen Peroxide  
**OR**
- 70% Isopropyl (Rubbing) Alcohol  
**OR**
- Diluted Household Bleach

**NEVER MIX** cleaners or chemicals like ammonia, bleach, vinegar, or rubbing alcohol - this can **create poison gases**

**ALWAYS** follow instructions on container

**IF YOU USE BLEACH, remember:**

- Add 1/3 to 1/2 cup of bleach to 1 gallon cold water, depending on your kind of bleach
- Use diluted bleach within one day
- Bleach can cause breathing problems, asthma attacks, skin burns, or poisoning - use safely!
- People with asthma or breathing problems should not breathe in bleach fumes.

## REMEMBER: PROTECT YOURSELF!

1. **Wear a mask and gloves**
2. **Don’t touch your face,**
3. **Open a window and turn on fans**
4. **WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE AND AFTER cleaning**

## QUESTIONS?

**You Can Contact:**

- Monroe County Department of Public Health [COVID19@monroecounty.gov](mailto:COVID19@monroecounty.gov)  
(585) 753-5555
- Finger Lakes Children’s Env. Health Center  
[FLCEHC@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:FLCEHC@urmc.rochester.edu)  
(844) 352-3420

**Or visit:**

- [Virussafehousekeeping.urmc.edu](http://Virussafehousekeeping.urmc.edu)