Prescriptions for Prevention

Safer Disinfecting in Your Home

Did you know?

Disinfecting high-touch surfaces can help to reduce spread of some kinds of infection, but some disinfecting chemicals can harm health and make asthma worse. Take steps to disinfect your home safely.

Action Plan

- **When is disinfection needed?** In most cases, basic soap and water or household cleaners are sufficient to reduce the spread of germs. Disinfecting high-touch surfaces (like doorknobs) may be needed if someone at home has been sick.

- **Children with asthma are especially sensitive to bleach and other strong chemicals.** Store these products safely, away from children. Always apply to a paper towel or cloth rather than spraying on the surface. When using disinfectants, open windows for fresh air, and keep children out of the area.

- **Select a disinfectant** using the EPA Design for the Environment (DfE) product list (see more info on next page). Or look for products with the DfE logo at the store.

- **Before disinfecting:** Clean surfaces with soap and water then wipe them dry to remove dust and grime. For regular household cleaning, this recipe will get rid of dust and grime but not all germs:

DESIGN for the ENVIRONMENT
Meets U.S. EPA DfE Product Criteria™
epa.gov/dfe

All-Purpose Household Cleaner for Routine Cleaning

1 cup warm water
3 drops unscented liquid soap
1/2 cup white vinegar
Optional: add lemon juice
Mix ingredients in an empty spray bottle and use to clean home surfaces.

Perelman School of Medicine University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health
NIEHS Grant: P2CES033428
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

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Resources

- **Disinfectant wipes:** Choose wipes that contain hydrogen peroxide, ethanol, or isopropyl alcohol, and avoid those with benzalkonium chloride and ammonium chloride.
- **Hydrogen peroxide (3%)** . Disinfect by applying hydrogen peroxide to the surface with a paper towel or cloth until glistening wet. Allow surfaces to completely dry or sit undisturbed for 6 minutes.
- **Diluted bleach** can also be used. To use it safely:

Small Batch	Bleach Dilution Recipe	Large Batch
1 teaspoon household bleach (5.25 or 6%) + 1 cup cool water		1/3 cup household bleach + 1 gallon cool water

Use a funnel. Make a fresh batch for each time you clean.

NEVER mix bleach and ammonia or another cleanser -- this can create toxic fumes.

Safety: Open windows for fresh air. Wear gloves. Children and adults with asthma should not be present when cleaning with bleach.

Environmental Working Group

Click this link or scan the QR code to use the Environmental Working Group's database to select safer cleaning products:

EPA Design for the Environment

View for a list of disinfectants and sanitizers that have been reviewed by the EPA and certified as DfE. To learn more, click this link or scan the QR code:

For more information on the resources here or other questions, contact the Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health at:
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