

NEWS

COVID-19 live updates: Comal County reports first death, Bexar County deaths increase to five

The right way to kill coronavirus germs, according to cleaning experts

Lynn Redmile, Carolyn Forte, Good Housekeeping

March 19, 2020



Killing germs on household surfaces is nothing new. You're probably already doing it when you routinely clean the bathroom and after you handle raw meat in the kitchen. But with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, keeping all frequently touched household surfaces, like faucet handles, phones and remote controls germ-free is more important than ever.

It's important to know that not all cleaning products that claim to disinfect are equally effective on all types of germs. There are many types of bacteria and viruses and not every product kills them all. Below is a list of products which

specifically work on the coronavirus, how to properly use them for maximum effectiveness — and which to avoid.

SUBSCRIBE

[Sign In](#)

COVID-19 live updates: Comal County reports first death, Bexar County deaths What kills coronavirus?

READ NOW

The Environmental Protection Agency has compiled a list of products that, while not specifically tested on the brand new version of the virus that causes COVID-19 just yet, have been proven effective on similar or harder-to-kill viruses, such as the rhinovirus, which causes the common cold. They expect them to work on the coronavirus, too. These products use a variety of different ingredients and formulations, so be sure to use them exactly as the label directs.

These products include:

- Clorox Disinfecting Wipes
- Clorox Clean-Up Cleaner + Bleach
- Lysol Disinfectant Spray
- Lysol Multi-Purpose Cleaner with Bleach
- Lysol Multi-Purpose Cleaner with Hydrogen Peroxide
- Purell Multi Surface Disinfectant Spray
- Microban 24 Hour Sanitizing Spray

Does hydrogen peroxide kill viruses?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hydrogen peroxide is a stable and effective disinfectant against viruses when used on hard, nonporous surfaces. Typically sold in 3% solutions, hydrogen peroxide can be used as is, directly from the bottle. It's best to keep it away from fabrics when cleaning and to wear gloves to protect your hands.

To use: Spray or wipe it on the surface, allowing it to remain wet for at least one minute before wiping.

Will alcohol disinfect surfaces?

SUBSCRIBE

Sign In

Isopropyl alcohol is an effective disinfectant against many pathogens, including COVID-19. **COVID-19 live updates: Coral County reports first death, Brevard County deaths increase to five**
Isopropyl alcohol, but concentrations can range from 60% to 99%. Seventy percent is best for quickly killing COVID-19 on surfaces — pure (100%) alcohol evaporates too quickly to be effective.

To use: Wipe or spray the surface with the alcohol and make sure it remains wet for at least 30 seconds.

Can vinegar kill germs?

No. According to the CDC and NSF International, a public health and safety organization, vinegar (or vinegar-based alternative cleaning products) should not be used to disinfect or sanitize. Cleaning products containing vinegar can be good in some instances, but vinegar is not registered with the EPA as a disinfectant and is ineffective against most bacteria and viruses – it does not kill the flu or COVID-19. Undiluted white vinegar may work on some limited types of bacteria, but it's not the best way to get surfaces germ-free. Besides, the new coronavirus is a virus, not a bacteria.

READ FULL STORY on GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

How to use cleaning products to kill coronavirus

Before using any disinfecting product, start by reading the label to make sure it is registered with the EPA and to see what strains of bacteria and viruses it kills. The EPA registration number can usually be found in small type on the bottom of the front or back label, and the bacteria and viruses the product is effective against are also usually listed.

EPA registration is required by law for any cleaner that claims to kill germs.

A few more points:

SUBSCRIBE

[Sign In](#)

COVID-19 live updates: Comal County reports first death, Bexar County deaths increase to five

[READ NOW](#)

- Know that sanitizing is not the same as disinfecting. Sanitizing (reducing the number of germs) usually takes less time — sometimes just 30 or 60 seconds — while disinfecting (killing those germs) can take anywhere up to 10 minutes, depending on the product.
- Check how long hard, non-porous surfaces must stay wet for the most effective germ killing. Because liquids evaporate, this may require you to apply the product multiple times.
- No product can adequately sanitize or disinfect a dirty surface, so make sure you clean — even with plain soap and water — before you disinfect.

What DIY household cleaner kills coronavirus?

According to the CDC, an easy way to disinfect hard, nonporous surfaces with a product you likely have at home is to combine 1/3 cup of regular chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite) per gallon of water. (Clorox recommends using 1/2 cup bleach per 1/2 gallon water.) For small batches, use 4 teaspoons of regular chlorine bleach and 1 quart of water.

To use: Wearing gloves, dip a cloth into the mixture, then wipe the surface. the solution to contact the surface for five minutes and air dry. For food contact surfaces, like countertops and high chair trays, rinse with warm water and air dry after disinfecting. Be careful not to splash the bleach solution on your clothes or in your eyes and use it sparingly on stainless steel sinks and surfaces.

What else you should know about cleaning your home right now

- Regular soap and water cleans germs away and cuts down the quantity of germs, which also reduces the chance of infection. But to actually kill germs, you also must sanitize or disinfect surfaces after cleaning them.
- Never combine disinfecting or any cleaning products and open the window or ventilate a room if fumes become bothersome.
- Soft surfaces are porous and will never fully reach the level of germ kill required to be fully disinfected. Some antibacterial sprays can sanitize soft surfaces, like pillows and plush toys.
- Test surfaces for safety in a hidden spot before using alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or any disinfectant on a surface, especially a delicate one. On food contact surfaces, rinse with clear water and dry after disinfecting, unless the product label specifically says it's not necessary.