

What's the difference between cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting?

It's important to disinfect your home regularly to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Here are the basics you need to know about disinfection and why it's necessary for keeping your family safe.

Know the Difference.

- Cleaning removes dust, debris and dirt from a surface by scrubbing, washing and rinsing.
- Sanitizing reduces the bacteria identified on the product's label on surfaces and in laundry.
- Disinfecting destroys or inactivates both the bacteria and viruses identified on the product's label (like influenza and rhinovirus) on hard, nonporous surfaces.

Disinfecting hard, nonporous surfaces is one of the most reliable ways to help lower the risk of spreading germs from surfaces by touch.¹

Why Disinfection Is Important.

Remember that you should disinfect – not **sanitize** – because disinfectants are the only products approved by the EPA to kill viruses on hard surfaces.² The main difference is that EPA-approved sanitizers only have claims for bacteria, while disinfectants have claims against both bacteria and viruses.

When to Disinfect.

While in quarantine, it's important to disinfect the hard, nonporous surfaces throughout your home at least 3 times per day.³ If someone in your household has COVID-19 or shows symptoms, disinfect the high-touch surfaces in the areas they enter as frequently as possible.⁴

Select a Disinfectant That Can Be Effectively Used Against COVID-19.

To make sure your product is an EPA-approved disinfectant, look on the label for an EPA registration number on the back panel. You can confirm a product can be used against COVID-19 by visiting [the EPA's site](#) or our site for a [full list of Clorox® products that are effective against COVID-19](#).

1, 3. According to Saskia Popescu, PhD, MPH, MA, CIC, a senior hospital infection prevention epidemiologist at HonorHealth and paid Clorox consultant.

2. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

4. According to Mary Gagliardi, AKA "Dr. Laundry," Clorox's in-house scientist and cleaning expert.