

With the current health issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, not only is hand washing a major means of preventing the spread disease so is properly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Manufacturers have listed instructions on their label for proper use of their product to ensure it will effectively kill the germs as intended. There is actually a two-step process to follow; first, clean the surface with a cleaner or detergent; second, disinfect the surface with a disinfectant.

Cleaners or detergents are products that remove soil, dirt, dust, organic matter, and germs (like bacteria, viruses, and fungi). They lift dirt and germs off surfaces so they can be rinsed away with water. Cleaning with a detergent is necessary to remove dirt that can prevent disinfectants from working. Some disinfectants have a cleaning agent mixed in, check the label to know which product you have.

Disinfectants are chemical products that are used to kill germs. The disinfectant's label should have a list of germs that the product can kill, along with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration number.

Contact time is especially important to kill the germs we suspect are present. To be effective you must read the label of the product you are using. Here are a few examples:

1. Clorox Disinfecting Wipes: "Wipe surface to be disinfected. Use enough wipes for treated surface to remain visibly wet for 4 minutes. Let surface dry. For highly soiled surfaces, clean excess dirt first."
2. Lysol Wipes, Lemon: "Wipe hard nonporous food contact surfaces with wipe until surface is visibly wet. Allow surface to remain wet for 10 minutes. Let air dry. If surfaces are extremely dirty, clean first with another wipe before disinfecting."
3. Clorox bleach can be used as disinfecting solution and should be used as follows: "Pre-clean any surface. Make a disinfecting solution (3/4 cup Clorox® Regular Bleach in a gallon of water); wash or wipe this solution on the surface; allow to stand for at least 5 minutes; rinse and air dry."
4. Pine-sol solution is also used as a disinfectant. "For general cleaning and deodorizing use ¼ cup per gallon of water, no rinsing is required except on rubber or asphalt tile. For tough surfaces use full strength and rinse immediately. For disinfecting apply product full strength to a clean sponge or cloth, let stand 10 minutes and then rinse. For heavily soiled surfaces, remove excess dirt first."

For further information regarding disinfecting surfaces go to [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or contact your nearest Public Health office.