

# Information about Cleaning and Disinfectants

Flu spreads easily. When people cough or sneeze, they spray droplets of flu virus through the air. These germs can be inhaled by someone else, or they can settle on surfaces where they get on people's hands. Special attention should be paid to cleaning spaces where a lot of people have close contact, like workplaces.

Environmental infection control should focus on regular cleaning for most surfaces and only target use of disinfection for surfaces touched frequently by hands. Routine application of disinfectants to housekeeping surfaces (e.g., floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets) is unnecessary. Use sanitizer wipes or cloths moistened with disinfectant to wipe electronic items (e.g., phones, computers, remote controls) that are touched often. Avoid excessive use of disinfectant or sanitizer on electronic equipment.

Clean bathroom surfaces on a regular basis. Air sanitizer products have not been shown to disinfect airborne influenza virus or reduce disease transmission and are not recommended.

Good cleaning with soap or detergent in water will remove most microorganisms, as well as soil and organic matter that would otherwise reduce the effectiveness of subsequent disinfection. Where disinfectants are used, products should be registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and labeled as effective against influenza virus on clean, hard non-porous surfaces. Follow label instructions carefully when using disinfectants and cleaners.

- [US EPA and NYS DEC Products Registered for Influenza - Sorted Alphabetically by Product Name](#) (PDF, 187KB, 38pg.)
- [US EPA and NYS DEC Products Registered for Influenza - Sorted by EPA Registration Number](#) (PDF, 178KB, 38pg.)

If registered disinfectants are not available, a chlorine bleach solution may be used - add about 1 tablespoon of bleach to a quart (4 cups) of water (smaller batches can be made from one teaspoon of bleach in a pint (2 cups) of water). Dispose of the used bleach solution when it becomes dirty or at least daily and mix a fresh solution when repeating the cleaning process. Make up bleach solutions in small batches to avoid discarding excess bleach.

Many surface disinfectants require the treated surface to remain wet for several minutes to be effective. Take note of any hazard advisories and indications for using personal protective items (such as household gloves). Do not mix disinfectants and cleaners unless the labels indicate it is safe to do so. Combining certain products (such as chlorine bleach and ammonia cleaners) can result in serious injury or death.

Revised: July 2009