

What are EPA-Approved Cleaning Solutions?

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a set standard of solutions that are approved and recommended for Schools and Day Cares to use as cleaning and disinfectant products against Communicable diseases.

How to Use EPA- Approved Solutions

Always follow label directions on cleaning products and disinfectants. Wash surfaces with a general household cleaner to remove germs. Rinse with water, and follow with an EPA-registered disinfectant to kill germs. Read the label to make sure it states that EPA has approved the product for effectiveness.

- If a surface is not visibly dirty, you can clean it with an EPA-registered product that both cleans (removes germs) and disinfects (kills germs) instead.
- Pay close attention to hazard warnings and directions on product labels. Cleaning products and disinfectants often call for the use of gloves or eye protection. For example, gloves should always be worn to protect your hands when working with bleach solutions.

Please see the List of EPA solutions approved below:

- <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-g-antimicrobial-products-registered-epa-claims-against-norovirus-feline#products>

When using an EPA-registered disinfectant, follow the label directions for safe, effective use. These directions include, **but are not limited to:**

- To ensure safety, always follow the product label. This includes making sure to follow the contact time, which is the amount of time the surface should be visibly wet.
- Keep disinfectants out of reach of children. Children should not apply disinfectants. While disinfectants are powerful tools for controlling the spread of disease, they can harm children's health if used or stored incorrectly. The risk disinfectants pose to human health increases if the label is not followed.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for applying the bleach solution to surfaces. If instructions are not available, leave the diluted bleach solution on the surface for at least 1 minute before removing or wiping. This is known as the "contact time" for disinfection. The surface should remain visibly wet during the contact time.
- Only use fogging, fumigation, and wide-area or electrostatic spraying to apply EPA-registered products designed and labeled for use in this way. Unless the pesticide product



label specifically includes disinfection directions for these application methods, it may not be effective when applied in these ways.

- Do not apply disinfectants to skin, food or cloth face coverings. Do not mix disinfectants with other chemicals. Use disinfectants only at the concentrations specified in the label directions.

Difference between Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sanitizing:

Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process **works by either cleaning or disinfecting** surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection.

What are High Priority Areas to Clean?

- Follow your school's standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting.
- Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often such as:
 - desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys.
- Some schools may also require daily disinfecting these items. Standard procedures often call for disinfecting specific areas of the school, like bathrooms.
- Flu viruses are relatively fragile, so standard cleaning and disinfecting practices are sufficient to remove or kill them. Special cleaning and disinfecting processes, including wiping down walls and ceilings, frequently using room air deodorizers, and fumigating, are not necessary or recommended.

How often should cleaning or disinfecting be completed?

Follow your school's standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often.

Immediately clean surfaces and objects that are visibly soiled. If surfaces or objects are soiled with body fluids or blood, use gloves and other standard precautions to avoid coming into contact with the



fluid. Remove the spill, and then clean and disinfect the surface.

How to Clean with Household Bleach?

First, clean visibly dirty surfaces with household cleaners containing soap or detergent before disinfecting with household bleach.

Safety guidelines when using bleach products:

- Follow the label directions on the bleach product. Check to see if you need to wear any protective equipment, such as gloves or eye protection.
- **Never** mix household bleach (or any disinfectants) with any other cleaners or disinfectants. This can release vapors that may be very dangerous to breathe in.
- Make sure you have good ventilation while using bleach products indoors (for example, open windows and doors to allow fresh air to enter).
- Use regular unscented household bleach. Most household bleach contains 5%–9% sodium hypochlorite. Do not use a bleach product if the percentage is not in this range or is not specified. This includes some types of laundry bleach or splashless bleach, which are not appropriate for disinfection.
- Follow the directions on the bleach bottle for preparing a diluted bleach solution. If your bottle does not have directions, you can make a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of room temperature water or
 - 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of room temperature water
- Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions for applying the bleach solution to surfaces. If instructions are not available, leave the diluted bleach solution on the surface for at least 1 minute before removing or wiping. This is known as the “contact time” for disinfection. The surface should remain visibly wet during the contact time.
- Wash hands after cleaning or disinfecting.
- Make a new diluted bleach solution daily. Bleach solutions will not be as effective after being mixed with water for over 24 hours.

Sources for more information:

Information on EPA and what it stands for: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/our-mission-and-what-we-do>

List of EPA approved cleaning solutions: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-g-antimicrobial-products-registered-epa-claims-against-norovirus-feline#products>

CDC recommendations on cleaning in schools: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>

