

Household Chemicals: Keeping Your Family Safe During COVID-19

Proper cleaning, disinfecting, and handwashing are important to prevent transmission of COVID-19. However, chemicals in some products can be harmful to your health. Protect your family from both COVID-19 and chemical exposures by choosing safer products and practices.

Chemicals in common disinfectants, cleaners, and soaps can harm your health.

Chemicals in cleaners and soaps enter the body through breathing (inhalation), ingestion, and through the skin. Children are especially at risk from harmful effects of cleaning products.

Breathing problems

Chemicals in cleaners and disinfectants pollute indoor air and can cause or worsen asthma and respiratory problems.

Skin and eye irritation

Skin and eyes can itch and burn when exposed to cleaning chemicals.

Hormone disruption

Cleaning products and soaps contain chemicals like fragrance and triclosan which interfere with hormones that control many important body functions.

Infertility

Some disinfectants are shown to impair reproduction in animal studies.

Antibacterial resistance

Antibacterial chemicals added to soaps and cleaners are not effective against COVID-19 or other viruses. Overuse of these chemicals contributes to the creation of germs that aren't killed by drugs.

Clean and disinfect safely.



Open windows when using cleaners and disinfectants.



Spray disinfectant on a cloth or use wipes. Dispose of them in a lidded trash can to reduce the risk of breathing in chemicals.



Never mix cleaning chemicals.



Avoid use of cleaning chemicals around children.



Always read label information and follow manufacturer's instructions.



Do not use cleaning products on or around food.



Keep cleaning products labeled and out of reach of children.

Choose safer products:

Cleaners and Disinfectants

Choose:



Disinfectants on *EPA list N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)* with one of the following ingredients:

- Hydrogen peroxide
- Thymol
- Alcohol (e.g. ethanol/ethyl alcohol, isopropyl alcohol/isopropanol)
- Lactic acid
- Citric acid
- Caprylic (Octanoic) acid

Green Seal Certified, EcoLogo, or EPA Safer Choice products



Avoid:



Bleach (Sodium hypochlorite)

Quaternary Ammoniums (benzalkonium chloride, benzethonium chloride, ammonium chlorides)

Fragrance

Mixing cleaners or chemicals

Foggers and aerosol sprays that increase risk of inhalational exposures

Products not proven to be effective against COVID-19 such as vinegar

Hand soaps and sanitizers:

Choose:



Plain soap and water

Fragrance free

Alcohol-based sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol (ethyl alcohol or isopropyl alcohol)

Wash hands according to guidelines

Avoid:



Added antibacterials such as triclosan, triclocarban, and quaternary ammoniums (benzalkonium chloride, benzethonium chloride, ammonium chlorides). These are no more effective than plain soap and water.

Fragrance

Methanol