



# COVID-19



## Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home

Every Day and When Someone Is Sick

Updated Apr. 5, 2021

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## Clean Regularly

Cleaning with a household cleaner that contains soap or detergent reduces the amount of germs on surfaces and decreases risk of infection from surfaces. In most situations, [cleaning alone removes most virus particles on surfaces](#). Disinfection to reduce transmission of COVID-19 at home is likely not needed unless someone in your home is sick or if someone who is positive for COVID-19 has been in your home within the last 24 hours.

### When and how to clean surfaces in your home

- Clean high-touch surfaces regularly (for example, daily) and after you have visitors in your home.
- Focus on high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, handles, light switches, and countertops.
- Clean other surfaces in your home when they are visibly dirty or as needed. Clean them more frequently if people in your household are [more likely to get very sick from COVID-19](#). You might also choose to disinfect.
- Clean surfaces using a product suitable for each surface, following instructions on the product label.



### Reduce contamination of surfaces

Take steps in your home to limit contamination of surfaces from airborne particles or from touching surfaces with contaminated hands.



- Ask unvaccinated visitors to wear masks.
- Follow guidance for [fully vaccinated people](#) before inviting visitors to your home.
- Isolate people who are sick with COVID-19.
- Have everyone in your household [wash hands](#) often, especially when returning from outside activities.

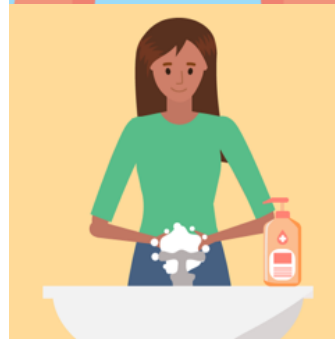
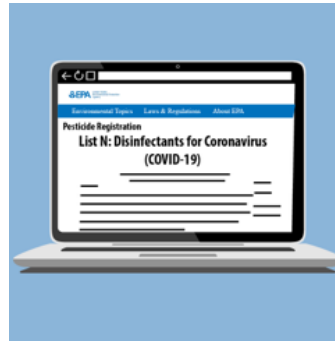


## Clean and Disinfect Your Home When Someone Is Sick

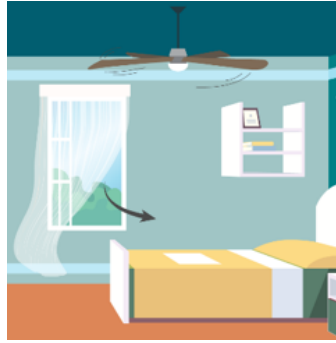
In addition to cleaning, disinfect your home when someone is sick or if someone who is positive for COVID-19 has been in your home within the last 24 hours. Disinfecting kills any remaining germs on surfaces and reduces the spread of germs. If you are caring for someone who has COVID-19, [detailed instructions for caregivers are available](#).

## How to disinfect

- **ALWAYS follow the directions on the label.**
  - The label includes instructions on how to use the product and specific instructions to keep you safe. Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet with a disinfectant for a certain period of time (see product label).
- Clean visibly dirty surfaces with household cleaners containing soap or detergent before disinfecting if your disinfectant product does not have a cleaning agent (check the label to verify).
- Use a disinfectant product from [EPA List N](#)  that is effective against COVID-19.
  - Read the label to make sure it meets your needs.
  - If products on [EPA List N](#)  are not available, [bleach solutions](#) can be used if appropriate for the surface.
- **Wear gloves for all tasks in the cleaning process.**
  - Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., eye protection) might be required based on the cleaning or disinfection products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.**
  - If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



- Ensure adequate [ventilation](#) while using any disinfectant.



## Cleaning and Disinfecting Bedrooms and Bathrooms When Someone Is Sick

**Keep a separate bedroom and bathroom for a person who is sick (if possible).**

### If the sick person is able to clean

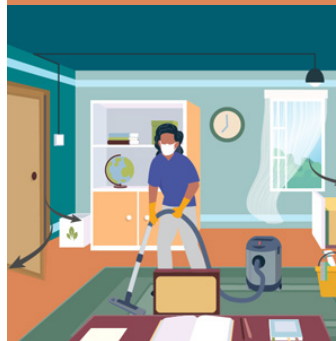
- Provide dedicated cleaning and disinfecting supplies to the person who is sick.
  - Supplies include tissues, paper towels, cleaners, and [EPA List N](#) [↗](#).
- In shared spaces, the person who is sick should clean and disinfect surfaces and items after each use.



### If the sick person cannot clean

Put on a mask and ask the sick person to put on a mask before entering the room.

- Wear gloves.
- Only clean and disinfect the area around the person who is sick when needed (when the area is soiled) to limit your contact with the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows, and use fans and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) settings to [increase air circulation](#).



## After the person who was sick no longer needs to be separated



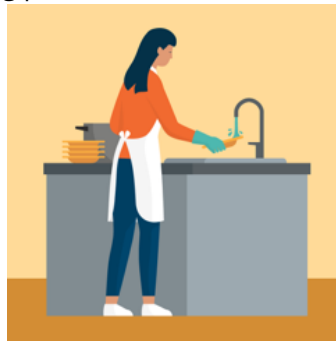
- Wear a mask when you enter the room to clean.
- Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before you clean and disinfect. If you can wait 24 hours to clean the areas that the sick person used (such as the bedroom and bathroom), then you only need to clean (disinfection is not needed).
  - Use and store cleaning and disinfectant products safely and correctly.
  - Store these products securely and use personal protective equipment, like gloves and masks, that is appropriate for the cleaning and disinfection products.
  - Use products from [EPA List N](#) [↗](#) according to the instructions on the product label.

See [precautions for household members and caregivers](#) for more information.

**Alternatively, wait a period of 3 days** after the person who was sick was in the space; after 3 days, no additional cleaning (aside from regular cleaning procedures) is needed.

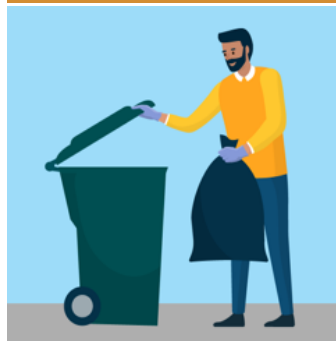
## After eating

- Wear gloves when handling dishes and utensils for the person who is sick.
- Wash dishes and utensils with soap and hot water or in the dishwasher.
- [Clean hands](#) after taking off gloves or handling used items.



## Handling trash

- Use a dedicated, lined trash can for the person who is sick.
- Use gloves when removing garbage bags and handling and disposing of trash.
- Wash hands after disposing of the trash.



## Tips for using chemical disinfectants safely

- Always follow the directions on the label of cleaning and disinfection products to ensure safe and effective use.
- Wear gloves and consider glasses or goggles for potential splash hazards to eyes.
- Ensure adequate [ventilation](#) (for example, open windows).
- Use only the amount recommended on the label.
- If diluting with water is indicated for use, use water at room temperature (unless stated otherwise on the label).
- Label diluted cleaning or disinfectant solutions.
- Store and use chemicals out of the reach of children and pets.
- Do not mix products or chemicals.
- Do not eat, drink, breathe, or inject cleaning and disinfection products into your body or apply directly to your skin as they can cause serious harm.
- Do not wipe or bathe people or pets with any surface cleaning and disinfection products.
- Special considerations should be made for people with asthma. Some cleaning and disinfection products can trigger asthma. [Learn more about reducing your chance of an asthma attack while disinfecting to prevent COVID-19.](#)




See [EPA's Six Steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use](#)

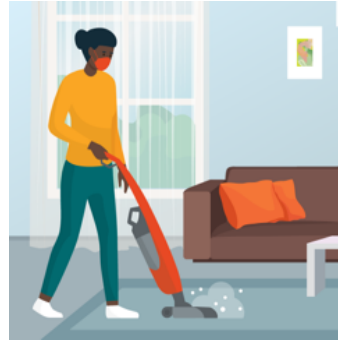


## Cleaning and Disinfecting Different Types of Surfaces

### Soft surfaces

For soft surfaces such as carpet, rugs, and drapes

- Clean the soft surfaces (carpets, rugs, and drapes) with soap and water or with cleaners made for use on these surfaces.
- Launder items (if possible) using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Disinfect using an [EPA List N](#)  product for use on soft surfaces, if needed.
- **Vacuum as usual.** If vacuuming an area occupied by a sick person or someone positive for COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, wear a mask when vacuuming.




### Laundry

- Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- It is safe to wash dirty laundry from a person who is sick with other people's items.
- If handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick, wear gloves and a mask.
- Clean clothes hampers or laundry baskets according to guidance for surfaces.
- Wash hands after handling dirty laundry.



### Electronics

- Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics (for example, phones, tablets, touchscreens, keyboards, and remote controls) to make cleaning easier.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the electronic device.
- If needed, use a disinfectant from the [EPA List N](#)  but note that many of the products for electronics contain alcohol because it dries quickly.



## More Information

[How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)

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[Your Guide to Masks](#)

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[When and How to Wash Your Hands](#)

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[Living in Close Quarters](#)

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[When to Wear Gloves](#)

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)