



# Safer Disinfecting in Your Home

## Did you know?

*Disinfecting high-touch surfaces can help to reduce spread of some kinds of infection but some disinfecting chemicals can harm health and make asthma worse. Take steps to disinfect your home safely.*

## Action Plan

- **When is disinfection needed?** In most cases, basic soap and water or household cleaners are sufficient to reduce the spread of germs. Disinfecting high-touch surfaces (like doorknobs) may be needed if someone at home has been sick.
- **Children with asthma are especially sensitive to bleach and other strong chemicals.** Store these products safely, away from children. When using disinfectants, open windows for fresh air, and keep children out of the area.
- **Select a disinfectant** using the [EPA Design for the Environment \(DfE\) Program list](#) that contains safer active ingredients such as hydrogen peroxide, citric acid, L-lactic acid, and ethanol. 3% hydrogen peroxide or properly diluted household bleach can also be used safely. Avoid products with quaternary ammoniums (Quats) like benzalkonium chloride and ammonium chloride.
- **Before disinfecting:** Clean surfaces with soap and water, then wipe dry to remove dust and grime. For regular household cleaning, this recipe will get rid of dust/grime and some germs (but will not kill all germs):

### All-Purpose Household Cleaner for Routine Cleaning

1 cup warm water

3 drops unscented liquid soap

½ cup white vinegar

*Optional: add fresh lemon juice*

Mix ingredients in an empty spray bottle. Use to clean home surfaces.

Use to clean various surfaces in your home with a microfiber cloth or paper

- **Disinfectant wipes** are a fast and convenient tool for cleaning; some are safer than others. When possible, choose wipes that contain hydrogen peroxide, ethanol, or isopropyl alcohol, and avoid those with Quats like benzalkonium chloride and ammonium chloride.

- **Hydrogen peroxide (3%)** can be applied to surfaces. If using a spray bottle, use the “stream” setting (avoid using the “mist” setting). Allow surfaces to completely dry (or wipe down with a paper towel after letting it sit for 6 minutes).
- **Diluted common household or laundry bleach** can also be used. Use it safely:
  - Do not use bleach with higher than 5.25% or 6% sodium hypochlorite.
  - **NEVER mix bleach and ammonia or any other cleanser - this can create toxic fumes.**
  - **Safety:** Open windows for fresh air. Wear gloves. Keep children out of the area. Using too much bleach can be harmful, especially for people with asthma.
  - **Dilute it carefully:** Use a funnel to carefully dilute the bleach with cool water. Make a fresh batch daily as it can lose strength over time.

<b>Bleach Dilution Recipe</b>	
<b>Small Batch:</b>	<b>Large Batch:</b>
1 teaspoon household bleach (5.25 or 6%) + 1 cup cool water	1/3 cup household bleach + 1 gallon cool water

- **Apply the diluted bleach safely:** Disinfect by carefully applying to the surface until glistening wet. If using a spray bottle, use the “stream” setting (avoid using the “mist” setting).
- **Disinfecting time:** Allow surfaces to completely dry (or wipe down with a paper towel after letting it sit for 5 to 10 minutes).

## Resources

For more information, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/cleaning-your-home](http://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/cleaning/cleaning-your-home)

[healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) and search “Cleaners, Sanitizers, and Disinfectants”

For more information visit: [nyscheck.org/rxs](http://nyscheck.org/rxs)

Was this information helpful? Visit [bit.ly/SaferDisinfectingRx](https://bit.ly/SaferDisinfectingRx) to let us know.

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