

Cleaning vs Disinfecting

How to know the difference!

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.

VS

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.

Disclaimer: This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under assistance agreement 00E02950 to Health & Hospital Corporation of Marion County. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does the EPA endorse trade names or recommend the use of commercial products mentioned in this document.



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6 Steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use

Step 1: Check that your product is EPA-approved

Find the EPA registration number on the product.



Reminder: Don't use Unregistered Disinfectants

If a product doesn't have an EPA registration number, it may not be safe or effective. Federal law requires disinfectants to be registered with the EPA.

Step 2: Read the directions



Follow the product's directions. Check "use sites" and "surface types" to see where you can use the product. Read the "precautionary statements." In addition, make sure the label includes the specific germs you need to control. Products can be intended for different pathogens.

Step 3: Pre-clean the surface

Make sure to wash the surface with soap and water if the directions mention pre-cleaning or if the surface is visibly dirty.



Step 4: Follow the contact time

You can find the contact time in the directions. The surface should remain wet the whole time to ensure the product is effective.

Step 5: Wear gloves and wash your hands

For disposable gloves, discard them after each cleaning. For reusable gloves, dedicate a pair to disinfecting COVID-19. Wash your hands after removing the gloves.



Step 6: Lock it up

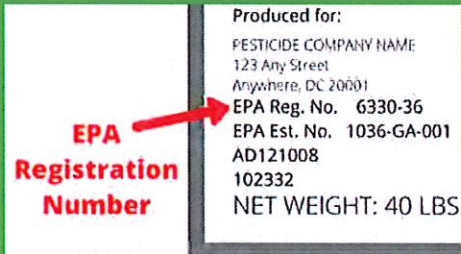
Keep lids tightly closed and store out of reach of children.

WHICH DISINFECTANTS KILL COVID-19?

FIND OUT AT [EPA.GOV/LISTNTOOL](https://www.epa.gov/listntool)

EPA expects all products on List N to kill SARS-CoV-2,
the specific coronavirus that causes COVID-19

I already have a
product. Does it
kill SARS-CoV-2?



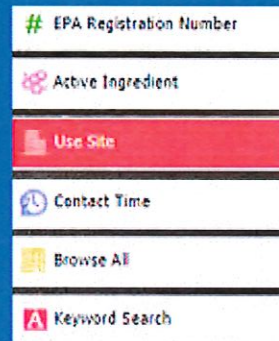
Find the EPA
Registration
Number
on the label

Enter only the first
two parts of the
Registration Number



If that number is
on List N, EPA
expects the
product to kill
SARS-CoV-2 ✓

I need to find a
product to kill
SARS-CoV-2.



Use List N's
Search Tool to
browse
products

Use the first two parts
of the EPA registration
number when searching
for products to purchase

EPA. Reg. No. 1234-12

If you need a more
advanced search,
choose "Export to CSV."
Use Excel, Sheets, or
Numbers to filter ✓

WHY FOCUS ON THE FIRST TWO PARTS OF THE EPA REG. NO.?

EPA registration numbers have two or three parts:

Who registered this product with EPA?

1 2 3 4

Which product is it?

1 2

Who is distributing the product?

1

The first two parts of the registration number identify the product

WHAT IF THE COMPANY AND PRODUCT NAMES DON'T MATCH?

Disinfectants can be marketed and sold under different product and brand names.

When using List N, use the first two parts of the EPA registration number - not the product name - to identify products

If the first two parts of the EPA Reg. No. match, the products have the same chemical composition and efficacy

INSIDE
Same formulation and efficiency

OUTSIDE
Different brand and product names



Disinfectant A

EPA. Reg. No. 1234-12-1



Disinfectant B

EPA. Reg. No. 1234-12-2



Disinfectant C

EPA. Reg. No. 1234-12-3



Disinfectant D

EPA. Reg. No. 1234-12-4



WHY ARE THERE OTHER PATHOGENS ON LIST N?

I ONLY NEED TO KILL THE CORONAVIRUS SARS-COV-2 (COVID-19).

To kill SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), follow disinfection directions for the following virus(es)

Poliovirus

Norovirus

Canine parvovirus;

If a product is on List N, you can use it against SARS-CoV-2...

Regardless of whether this column lists poliovirus, norovirus, or some other pathogen.

Disinfectants may have different directions for different pathogens

To kill SARS-CoV-2, follow the directions on the product's label for killing the pathogen specified on List N



SAFER CHOICE

A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Voluntary Program

We all care about making our homes and workplaces safer. But when it comes to cleaning and other products, it's hard to know which ones contain safer ingredients. That's why EPA created the Safer Choice label – to help you find products made with ingredients that are safer for our families, pets, workplaces, and the environment.

Safer Choice-labeled Products

Safer Choice labels a wide range of products, including:

- All-purpose cleaners
- Appliance cleaners
- Bathroom cleaners
- Car cleaners
- Carpet cleaners
- Degreasers
- Dish detergents
- Floor care products
- Furniture cleaners
- Glass cleaners
- Hand soaps
- Laundry products
- Kitchen and countertop cleaners
- Pet care products
- Wood cleaners

For the full list of products, visit www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products

QUESTIONS?

saferchoice@epa.gov
epa.gov/saferchoice

BENEFITS OF SAFER CHOICE

Products that carry the Safer Choice label have been carefully evaluated by EPA scientists. Every ingredient must meet strict safety criteria for both human health and the environment, including carcinogenicity, reproductive/developmental toxicity, toxicity to aquatic life, and persistence in the environment. Products made with safer chemicals also can improve indoor air quality because fumes from cleaning products can linger long after they have been applied, which can aggravate asthma and other respiratory conditions.



THE SAFER CHOICE DIFFERENCE

Our product review process is grounded in more than 40 years of EPA experience evaluating the human health and environmental characteristics of chemicals.

Products that carry the Safer Choice label must meet requirements for:

- Safer chemical ingredients
- Performance
- Packaging
- Ingredient disclosure
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

CONNECT WITH SAFER CHOICE

- Like Safer Choice on Facebook: facebook.com/EPASaferChoice
- Use our hashtag on Twitter: [#EPASaferChoice](https://twitter.com/EPASaferChoice)

What you should know about...

Green Cleaning, Allergies and Asthma



Most people believe that inhaling a little bit of mist when spraying cleaning products isn't harmful, but the truth is that many of the toxic chemicals in cleaning products are fat soluble, which are difficult for the body to break down. Over time, these toxins accumulate and have negative impact on our health.

TIP: when cleaning with a spray bottle, turn the nozzle to spray a "stream" instead of a "mist." By doing this, you reduce the risk of inhaling or absorbing chemicals into the body.

A Clean House...

There are stronger risk factors for developing asthma due to prolonged exposure to indoor allergens such as house dust, dust mites found in carpet and cloth furniture, tobacco smoke, and chemical irritants. The best defense is a clean home. Cleaning is an important part of staying healthy, and that is why using green cleaning products and processes that are safe is so important.

... is a Healthy House!



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Basic Ingredients...



for natural green cleaning products.

Distilled White Vinegar: Good for dissolving grease, dirt, soap scum, and mineral deposits and absorbs odors.

Baking Soda: An effective replacement for harsh scouring powders. Mildly abrasive and naturally deodorizing.

Water: Distilled is best, but tap is fine.

Salt: Works as an effective yet gentle scouring agent. Salt also serves as a catalyst for other ingredients, such as vinegar, to boost cleaning and deodorizing action.

Cornstarch: A natural abrasive, highly absorbent (absorbs moisture, oil and smells), pH neutral (it can be mixed with many household ingredients both acidic and basic).

Dishwashing Liquid: Safer choice options include: ECOS dishmate dish soap, free and clear and Seventh Generation dish liquid, free and clear.



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What's in Your Cabinet?



The best green cleaners are natural products that can be found in your own pantry. Are you ready to clean green? Pull out a bottle of vinegar, and you are ready to go! If you are wondering just how easy it is to clean with vinegar, you are in luck. Here are a few tips to get you green cleaning! Please note that you should only make what you'll use that day and be sure to label all bottles after making any mixture.

TOILET BOWL CLEANER

Baking soda
Vinegar

- Pour equal parts baking soda and vinegar in the toilet bowl.
- Wait several minutes for fizzing to stop, then scrub and flush.



FLOOR CLEANER

½ cup white vinegar
1 gallon warm water

- Mix ingredients.
- Avoid over wetting the floor by using a spray bottle.
 - Mop as usual.
- Rinse with clean water.



TUB AND TILE CLEANER

White vinegar
Baking soda or non-iodized salt

- To remove film, build-up on bathtubs, apply vinegar full-strength to a sponge and wipe.
- Next, use baking soda or salt as you would scouring powder.
- Rub with a damp sponge and rinse thoroughly with clean water.



Disclaimer: The Environmental Protection Agency has not tested and does not endorse these recipes.



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Green Cleaning Shopping List



White Vinegar



Dish Washing Liquid



Baking Soda



Noniodized Salt



Cornstarch



Distilled Water



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