



FLU PREVENTION: RECOMMENDATIONS

OCTOBER 2009

FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES (FASD)

CLEANING, DISINFECTING, AND SANITIZING

OVERVIEW

The flu virus spreads easily. When individuals cough or sneeze, they spray droplets/germs through the air. These droplets can be inhaled by others, or can settle on surfaces. Special attention should be paid to cleaning spaces where a lot of people have close contact. Environmental infection control should focus on regular cleaning for most surfaces and only target use of disinfection for surfaces touched frequently by hands.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

How long can the H1N1 flu and other influenza viruses remain live outside the body on objects such as desktops, books, and doorknobs?

Studies have shown that the H1N1 flu and influenza viruses can survive on surfaces and can infect a person for up to 2 to 8 hours after being deposited.

What kills the H1N1 flu and other influenza virus droplets/germs?

Influenza viruses can be destroyed by heat (167-212°F [75-100°C]). Several chemical germicides are effective against the H1N1 flu and other influenza viruses if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), and alcohols.

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

Droplets from a cough or sneeze of a person infected with the flu virus move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches droplets from another person on a surface like a desk, for example, and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

Therefore, it is important to clean and disinfect hard surfaces and frequently used items especially those touched by more than one person. Examples of these surfaces at work include desktops, telephones, computer keyboard and mouse, doorknobs, refrigerator door handles, and microwaves. At home, keep hard surfaces like tables and chairs, kitchen countertops, kitchen appliances, infant high chairs, children's toys, remote controls, waste baskets, and bathroom surfaces clean and disinfected.

When a surface looks clean, does that mean it is germ-free?

According to the CDC, disinfecting and cleaning are not the same. Germs cannot be seen with the eye. Cleaning removes germs from surfaces and disinfecting destroys germs from surfaces. Disinfecting after cleaning gives an extra level of protection from germs. Be sure to follow the label directions, as many products need to "stand" on a surface for a period of time in order to kill germs.

What is the difference between a disinfectant, an antimicrobial, and a sanitizing product?

Disinfectants and antimicrobials destroy pathogenic microorganisms. These two terms are used interchangeably. Sanitizers reduce the number of microorganisms to a safe level by killing them, typically, sanitizers kill 99.9 percent of these germs. Any product that claims to kill bacteria or viruses must be registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), so look for products that have an EPA registration number on the product label.

What should I use to disinfect?

You should use antimicrobial chemicals to effectively disinfect a surface. The EPA web site at <http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/influenza-a-product-list.pdf> lists "Antimicrobial Products Registered for Use Against Influenza A Virus on Hard Surfaces."

When disinfecting surfaces, it is important to:

- Follow product label directions and read safety precautions (some products recommend the use of gloves).
- Clean surfaces with soap and water or another type of cleaner to remove dirt and debris prior to disinfecting.
- Apply disinfectant to the surface and let stand for at least a few minutes (follow the label) to allow it to work.
- Use disinfecting wipes or specially designed products on electronics.
- Check the expiration date.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) CONTINUED

How do I know which product is best for my surface?

It is best to read the product label carefully and purchase and use products as intended. Also, use common sense when considering the type of surface on which the product will be used. For example, do not spray products on electronics, as they could cause damage to the component or cause an electrical “short.” Use sanitizer wipes or cloths moistened with disinfectant to wipe electronic items (e.g., phones, computers, remote controls) that are touched often. Avoid excessive use of disinfectant or sanitizer on electronic equipment. Note: air sanitizer products have not been shown to disinfect airborne influenza virus or reduce disease transmission and are not recommended.

What products can I use at my workstations?

At NASA Headquarters we are recommending that employees only use disinfectant wipes and avoid using sprays and liquids. The Information Technology & Communication Division (ITCD)/ODIN support the use of Lysol Brand disinfectant wipes for use on all workstation computers at HQ (laptops, desktops, keyboards, mice, monitors, etc.). The wipes can also be use on telephones and other hard surfaces. Read the label carefully to make sure they are EPA- registered and are effective against influenza virus.

Are cleaning products safe?

Companies evaluate the safety of existing cleaning products by talking with consumers, reviewing scientific developments, and monitoring product use data that may affect the safety assessment process. Safety also lies in the hands of the consumer. In the real-world use of cleaning products, problems generally arise when they are improperly handled, used or stored. Consumers should read the product label, use cleaning products only as directed and store products properly and securely.

Additional Information

Disinfectant products available from grocery stores, hardware stores, and commercial cleaning product suppliers have been registered with the EPA. The following are a sample of commonly found products that are included in the EPA list – “Antimicrobial Products Registered for Use Against Influenza A Virus on Hard Surfaces”:

- Windex Antibacterial Glass & Surface Cleaner
- Clorox
- Fresh Scent Clorox
- Pine Sol Household Cleaner Disinfectant
- Pine-Sol Spray
- Ultra Clorox Brand Regular Bleach
- Ultra Clorox Brand Fresh Scent Bleach
- Clorox Disinfecting Spray III
- Ultra Clorox Bleach Formula
- Lysol Brand Disinfectant Foam Power Heavy Duty Bathroom Cleaner
- Lysol Brand Disinfectant Direct Multi-Purpose Cleaner
- Lysol Brand Pre-Moistened Touch-Ups Disinfecting Cleaning Wipes
- Lysol Brand disinfectant Trigger Spray
- Lysol Brand Disinfectant Basin, Tub, & Tile Cleaner Pre-Moistened Wipe
- Lysol Brand Disinfectant Multi-Purpose Cleaner
- Lysol Brand Disinfectant Pine Scent Basin Tub & Tile Cleaner
- Lysol Brand Deodorizing Disinfectant Cleaner
- Lysol Brand Disinfectant Bleach Plus
- Lysol Brand Hard Water Stain Cleaner
- Comet Disinfecting Bathroom Cleaner
- Mr. Clean Multi-Surfaces Antibacterial
- Ultra Mr. Clean
- Tough Act The Heavy Duty Bathroom Cleaner

Additional brands and products are listed at: <http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/influenza-a-product-list.pdf> or <http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/influenza-disinfectants.html> for more information on Antimicrobial Products Registered for Use Against the H1N1 Flu and Other Influenza A Viruses on Hard Surfaces.

Source: www.flu.gov and <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>