



COVID-19: General Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting for Non-Health Care Settings

This document provides recommendations for cleaning and disinfection of non-health care settings to help slow person-to-person transmission of COVID-19.

There is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) happening in New York City. Community transmission means that COVID-19 is circulating in NYC, and that we should act as if we are all exposed. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness (which affects breathing) caused by a new coronavirus. Symptoms can range from mild, such as a sore throat, to severe, such as pneumonia. Most people will not need medical attention for their symptoms. The best course of action is to stay home if sick and stay home as much as possible even if you are not sick. Together we can slow the spread and protect those at higher risk of severe illness and our health care workers from getting sick.

General recommendations for routine cleaning and disinfection

Routine cleaning of surfaces using appropriate cleaning and disinfection methods can help to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus. Non-health care settings should be vigilant about routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, paying special attention to frequently touched surfaces and objects. There is no need to do any cleaning beyond the routine cleaning, even if there was someone in your facility with COVID-19.

- **Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces regularly**

- Frequently touched surfaces and objects can vary by location. Examples include: doorknobs, light switches, handrails, kitchen appliances, counters, drawer pulls, tables, sinks, faucet and toilet handles, drinking fountains, elevator buttons, push plates, phones, keys and remote controls.
- When cleaning workspaces, cubicles and other office areas, pay special attention to disinfecting surfaces and objects such as desks, chairs, phones, printers, keyboards, computer mice and other common areas.
- When cleaning vehicles, pay special attention to surfaces and objects that are touched often by passengers, such as door handles, window buttons, locks, payment machines, arm rests, seat cushions, buckles and seatbelts. Also wipe down surfaces that you frequently touch, such as the steering wheel, radio buttons, turn indicators, and cup holders. For more information, visit nyc.gov/coronavirus and look for "Guidance for Vehicle Operators" at the bottom of the page.
- When cleaning food establishments, pay special attention to cash registers, food, deli and checkout counters.

- **How to clean and disinfect**

Remove any visible dirt and grime before using disinfectants. Disinfecting surfaces removes most germs and are most effective on clean surfaces or objects. Coronaviruses are relatively easy to kill with most disinfectants. When using cleaning and disinfecting products, always read and follow the manufacturer's directions (e.g., application method, contact time). Staff should follow label directions and existing procedures for using gloves or other personal protective equipment (PPE). When used, gloves should be discarded after each cleaning.

- **Hard or non-porous items** (examples: tables, desks, floors, doorknobs, phones)
 - If a surface is visibly dirty, first clean using a regular cleaning product, such as soapy water for a table or cleaning cloth for a cell phone.
 - Disinfecting:
 - To disinfect a cleaned surface or object, you can use regular disinfection products (e.g., Clorox, Purell, and Peroxide products) or use a disinfectant that has been registered with New York State and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Visit dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/covid19.pdf for the full list of products that are effective against COVID-19.
 - You can also disinfect using diluted household bleach solutions, if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not expired. To make a bleach solution, add 4 teaspoons of bleach to 1 quart or 1 liter of water. Prepare a new solution daily or as needed. **Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.**
 - You can also disinfect using solutions with at least 70% alcohol.
 - Wipe the surface or object thoroughly with the solution and let it dry.
- **Soft or porous items** (examples: clothing, bed linens, carpets and rugs, upholstered chairs, sofas)
 - For clothing, towels, linens and other items that go in the laundry, wash at the warmest possible setting with your usual detergent and then dry completely. Avoid "hugging" laundry before washing it to avoid self-contamination. Do not shake dirty laundry before washing to avoid spreading virus or other dirt and bacteria through the air. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
 - For other soft items, such as a rug, drapes, or upholstered sofa, follow manufacturer's instructions or a cleaning product specifically for that item. For example, use a steam cleaner or apply a disinfectant product from dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/covid19.pdf that is suitable for fabrics.

Additional recommendations for facilities

- Custodian and facilities staff should ensure that all handwashing sinks have clean running water, soap and paper towels at all times.
- Consider having alcohol-based hand sanitizers in common areas (for example: bathrooms, laundry rooms, gyms and playrooms) to encourage hand hygiene.
- No special ventilation precautions are recommended for residential or commercial buildings.
- Consider posting the [Stop the Spread of Coronavirus Flyer](#) in common areas, available in multiple languages by visiting nyc.gov/coronavirus.

Face masks

The New York City Health Department does not recommend the routine use of face masks, unless you are instructed to do so by your health care provider. **If you are sick, stay home.** Unnecessary use of face masks can deplete supplies for health care providers and facilities that are providing needed medical care to sick individuals in inpatient settings or in specific settings where staff cannot maintain 6 feet of separation from a patient.



Hand hygiene and other preventive measures

Staff can take important preventive measures to protect themselves and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Staff should follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, such as practicing healthy personal hygiene and avoiding close contacts (social distancing).

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Key times to clean hands include:
 - **After** blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
 - **After** using the toilet
 - **Before** eating or preparing food
 - **After** touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste
 - **Before** and **after** providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g. a child)
 - **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
 - **After** handling trash
 - **After** cleaning activities
 - **After** using public transportation
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve. Do not use your hands.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead, wave.
- If you do interact with a client, remember to wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer after every transaction.
- Keep at least 6 feet between yourself and others, whenever possible.
- Do not gather in large crowds.

Separate facts from fear and guard against stigma

The outbreak is absolutely no excuse to spread racism and discrimination. If you are being harassed due to your race, ethnicity, nation of origin or other identities, you can report discrimination or harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights by calling **311** and saying "human rights" or by visiting nyc.gov/cchr and clicking on "Report Discrimination."

Take care of yourself and your family

If the symptoms of stress become overwhelming, you can connect with counselors at NYC Well, a free and confidential mental health support service. NYC Well staff are available 24/7 and can provide brief counseling and referrals to care. For support, call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173 or [chat online](https://nyc.gov/nycwell) at nyc.gov/nycwell.

Stay informed

A lot of information about coronavirus on social media and even in some news reports is not based on facts. Get your information about COVID-19 from trusted sources like the NYC Health Department: nyc.gov/coronavirus.

For real-time updates, text "COVID" to 692-692. Text "COVIDESP" to 692-692 for updates in Spanish. Messages and data rates may apply.

Additional guidance is available at nyc.gov/coronavirus under "Guidance for Schools, Businesses and Facilities."