

## MEMBER ALERT

### CLEANING AND DISINFECTING AT YOUR SITE

**Cleaning and disinfecting are 2 separate steps in the clean-up process.**

- **Cleaning** is aimed at removing germs (including viruses), dirt and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning doesn't kill germs, but it reduces risk of infection by reducing the number of germs on the surface.
  - **For cleaning:**
    - Warm water and soap are effective for cleaning. They remove germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces.
    - If you don't have soap, use another detergent with water.
- **Disinfecting**, on the other hand, doesn't necessarily make the surface look clean, but it does reduce risk of infection by killing germs on the surface. The stronger the disinfectant and the longer it stays on the surface the more germs it will kill.
  - **For disinfecting:**
    - Use a commercial EPA-registered disinfectant if one is available. An alternative is a bleach solution: 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.
    - To reduce risk of asthma among children and staff, try to use disinfectant products on the [EPA's N list](#) with asthma-safer ingredients (hydrogen peroxide, citric acid or lactic acid) and as opposed to products that include peroxyacetic acid, sodium hypochlorite (bleach) or quaternary ammonium compounds.
    - Disinfecting sprays and household bleach solutions should be left to sit and coat surfaces to be disinfected according to label instructions.
    - Disinfectants cannot be used by students or applied when students are present.
      - The "Keep Out of Reach of Children" warning is not simply a suggestion. It is a federal law, per [40 CFR 156.66](#). Disinfectants are pesticides, and must be treated as chemical hazards.
    - The Healthy Schools Act requires anyone using any pesticide at a school or child care center to complete Healthy Schools Act training. People who may need the training include: custodians, nutrition service workers, groundkeepers, teachers, child care staff, and pest management professionals. DPR created free, online courses to meet the Healthy Schools Act requirement.
- **Safe cleaning and disinfecting**
  - Ideally, full-scale cleaning and disinfecting are done after hours, when children are not present, giving the site adequate time to air out before children are back.
  - Spot cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched or soiled areas should be carried out regularly throughout the day, even when children are present. Surfaces of concern may include sink knobs, toilet handles, tables, and door handles.
  - Check the labels on products. Never mix bleach or any product containing bleach with any product containing ammonia, as the gas produced is extremely harmful.
  - Cleaning and disinfecting products should be stored out of reach of children.
  - If at all possible, cleaning and disinfecting should be done with windows and/or doors open, allowing chemicals to dissipate, or when children are outside or otherwise away.
  - Make sure anyone using cleaning products is adequately protected with PPE, including gloves and/or eye protection, as required by the product instructions.