



## Disinfectant Myths Debunked

### Myth #1

Cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting are the same thing.

False: Cleaners use soap and detergents to physically remove dirt, dust and other soils. Cleaners do not kill germs. Sanitizers reduce the number of germs to a level considered safe for the public. Disinfectants chemically kill 99.9999% of germs that spread disease. Cleaners are not regulated by the EPA. Disinfectants and sanitizers are regulated by the US EPA.

### Myth #2

Bleach is the ultimate disinfectant.

False: In order for bleach to function properly as a disinfectant or sanitizer, the surface *MUST* be pre-cleaned prior to the application of bleach. Disinfecting and sanitizing with bleach is a two-step process. Bleach's shelf life is unstable and depends on the age and storage conditions. The amount of active chlorine within the bleach will vary per product. Sodium hypochlorite, a.k.a bleach, will break down into salt and water which is why it is important to never store bleach in warm areas. A fresh solution of bleach must be made prior to disinfection or sanitation. The water ions or hardness and soil contaminants from a dirty container can adversely affect available chlorine ppms.

### Myth #3

Disinfectants work instantly.

False: Different disinfectants require different "contact times" for proper disinfection. Please consult the specific disinfectant label and directions for the pathogen you are trying to kill.



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#### **Myth #4**

The more chemical, the better.

False: Cleaning and disinfecting products are formulated for use in specific amounts and concentrations. When mixing or diluting products, it is important to closely follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid potentially hazardous situations.

#### **Myth #5**

Disinfecting alone is more powerful than cleaning.

False: Cleaning and disinfecting should be performed together. If there is visible soil present, you should remove it by using an all-purpose cleaner before disinfecting. High concentrations of soil may prevent the disinfectant from working effectively.

#### **Myth #6**

Soft surfaces, like pillows and couches can be disinfected.

False: Disinfectants work only on hard non-porous surfaces. You can sanitize a soft surface but you cannot disinfect it.