



COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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STEP ONE: SITE ASSESSMENT & PPE

What is the difference between masks and respirators?

Respirators have filters to remove specific contaminants. Face masks simply create a barrier, preventing materials from getting into or excretions from getting out of the wearer's mouth.

What precautions should I take when cleaning/disinfecting?

If someone in a facility is sick, all areas they have used should be closed off, with any outside doors and windows opened to increase air circulation. Wait 24 hours or as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting all areas and surfaces used by the sick person.

Whether a sick person has used an area or not, always wear disposable gloves and gowns for the entire cleaning and disinfecting process, including handling trash. After you carefully remove these items, immediately wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty and soap and water are unavailable, you may use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Additional personal protective equipment (PPE), such as safety glasses, might be needed based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash. Always consult product labels and ensure proper ventilation of the area.

Never mix bleach with any other chemicals.

What is the recommended PPE when performing corrective disinfection?

- N-95 surgical mask or powered air purifying respirator (PAPR)
- Eye protection – face shield, safety glasses, safety goggles
- Disposable gown or properly laundered reusable covering
- Gloves
- Shoe covers or shoes that can be properly decontaminated

STEP TWO: THE RIGHT APPLICATION METHOD AND DISINFECTANT

How do I know which disinfectants to use against SARS-CoV-2?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided a list of recommended and approved disinfectants for our fight against COVID-19 through the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. You can view the list—called List N—by [clicking here](#).

Why don't I see Betco's company name on List N?

As stated in List N's introductory text, "these products may be marketed and sold under different brand names, but if they have the same EPA registration number, they are the same product." These are known as supplemental, secondary, or sub-registrations.

As of March 31, 2020, Betco® has 8 such products. We have isolated them for your reading convenience in a Betco-only version, which you can download by [clicking here](#).

All disinfectant product labels must include the EPA registration number. For secondary registrations, a company EPA ID follows the registration number, which is why Betco's ID—4170—appears after the EPA registration number on our labels.

How does the EPA know these products work against SARS-CoV-2?

Because SARS-CoV-2 is such a new virus, it is not available commercially for laboratory testing. The EPA expects these disinfectants to be effective against SARS-CoV-2 based on:

- Demonstrated efficacy against a harder-to-kill virus
- Demonstrated efficacy against another human coronavirus similar to SARS-CoV-2
- Qualification for the emerging viral pathogen claim

What is an emerging viral pathogen claim?

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases defines emerging infectious diseases/pathogens as those "that have newly appeared in a population or have existed but are rapidly increasing in incidence or geographic range." Many of the emerging pathogens of greatest concern are pathogenic viruses, and the ability of some of these viruses to persist on environmental surfaces can play a role in human disease transmission. SARS-CoV-2 is such a pathogenic virus.

Because the occurrence of emerging viral pathogens is less common and predictable than established pathogens, few if any EPA-registered disinfectant product labels specify use against this category of infectious agents. Therefore, in 2016, EPA provided a voluntary, two-stage process to enable use of certain EPA-registered disinfectant products against emerging viral pathogens not identified on the product label.

A company can apply for an emerging viral pathogen claim, even before an outbreak occurs, based on previous EPA-approved claims for harder-to-kill viruses.



The emerging viral pathogen guidance was triggered for SARS-CoV-2 on Jan. 29, 2020. The EPA reviews the supporting information and determines if the claim is acceptable. Once approved, a company can make certain off-label claims as specified in the policy in the event of an outbreak, such as SARS-CoV-2. For instance, the company can include an efficacy statement on:

- Technical literature distributed to health care facilities, physicians, nurses, and public health officials
- Non-label-related websites
- Consumer information services
- Social media sites

What is the difference between disinfectants, sanitizers, and cleaners?

Cleaners use soap or detergents to physically remove dirt, dust, other soils. While cleaners do not kill germs, they do remove them. Cleaners are not regulated or tested by the EPA.

Sanitizers reduce bacteria on a surface by at least 99.9%, while disinfectants kill bacteria, viruses, mold, mildew, and fungi. Both sanitizers and disinfectants are regulated and tested by the EPA and must be proven efficacious for specific germs.

Can I use disinfectants in a sprayer, fogger, or mister devices?

You may utilize Betco disinfectants in spray devices, as long as the applicator is set to a coarse spray setting and the sprayer does not further dilute or alter the chemistry. It is advised to consult with a spray device's manufacturer to ensure that the device is set to a coarse spray. Always apply disinfectants directly to surfaces.

Fogging or highly defined misting are not approved or intended application methods for Betco disinfectants, as they have not been tested for use in such applications.

Are all sprayers in the [Application Method Guide](#) available at Betco?

No, Betco only makes the disinfectants that can be used in these sprayers. Please consult the applicator companies directly for purchase.

Can I use microfiber wipes to apply the disinfectant?

Yes, microfiber wipes are an excellent way to apply disinfectants. These wipes must be changed when visibly dirty and should be laundered on a frequent basis.

Which products are safe to use when disinfecting food-contact surfaces?

All Betco disinfectants can be used on food-contact surfaces (areas where food may be prepared, served, or stored). You simply need to rinse with potable water after the required dwell time.



Betco's [Symplicity™ Sanibet™ Multi-Range Sanitizer](#) may be used to **sanitize** food contact surfaces and does not require a rinse with potable water. Please consult the product label for more specific instruction.

How long do you have to wait after disinfection before allowing people to enter the room?

This answer depends greatly on several conditions, such as the size of the room, the amount of ventilation and air flow in the room, and how the disinfectant is applied. In general, if spraying a coarse spray directly on the surface, people should be able to enter the room shortly after the necessary dwell time (5–10 minutes).

How effective are alternative disinfection methods, such as ultrasonic waves, high-intensity UV radiation, and LED blue lights?

From the CDC, "The efficacy of these disinfection methods against the virus that causes COVID-19 is not known. EPA only recommends use of the [surface disinfectants identified on List N](#) against the virus that causes COVID-19. EPA does not routinely review the safety or efficacy of pesticidal devices, such as UV lights, LED lights, or ultrasonic devices. Therefore, EPA cannot confirm whether, or under what circumstances, such products might be effective against the spread of COVID-19."

Can sanitizing tunnels at a building's exit or entrance prevent the spread of COVID-19?

CDC does not recommend the use of sanitizing tunnels. There is no evidence that they are effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Chemicals used in sanitizing tunnels could cause skin, eye, or respiratory irritation or damage.

STEP THREE: PROPER INFECTION CONTROL PROCEDURES

How do I use disinfectants against coronavirus?

Remove any visible soil before using a disinfectant.

All disinfectant label instructions should be followed carefully, especially with regard to:

- Dwell time, or amount of time that the surface must stay wet to ensure that germs are killed
- Concentration, as some products may need to be diluted before use
- Application method, including whether to use a sponge, paper towel, microfiber cloth, etc.
- Personal protective equipment and other safety considerations
- Suitability for use on different types of surfaces

How should I disinfect electronics?

First, always check with the manufacturer of the electronics to see if there are any explicit requirements or specifications. To apply disinfectant to most electronics, spray the disinfectant onto a microfiber cloth or towel, do not oversaturate the fabric, then wipe the surface and allow to air dry. Never spray directly on electronics.

What about soft or porous surfaces, like carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes?

No disinfectant can claim to disinfect soft surfaces. You may, however, sanitize with an EPA-registered soft surface sanitizer, such as Betco's [Triforce Disinfectant and Soft Surface Sanitizer](#), according to label directions.

You may also clean soft surfaces with soap and water or a suitable cleaner, then launder if possible (see question #11 below).

According to Juan Dumois, a pediatric infectious-diseases physician, "In general, coronaviruses last a lot longer on hard non-porous surfaces compared to porous surfaces."

How should I do laundry with regard to SARS-CoV-2?

Clothing, towels, linens, and similar articles should be laundered using manufacturer's directions in the warmest suitable water and be completely dry before use. Items used by an infected person can be washed with other items.

Dirty laundry should not be shaken to avoid releasing the virus into the air and should only be handled when wearing disposable gloves. Wash hands with soap and water immediately after removing the gloves.

Remember to pre-clean and disinfect hampers according to label instructions.

How do I disinfect children's toys?

Be careful when disinfecting any item that could enter children's mouths. The best recommendation is to wash the toys in soap and water, rinse, and allow to air dry. If this is not feasible, use either Betco's [Symplicity™ Sanibet™ Multi-Range Sanitizer](#) or [Sanibet RTU](#) according to label directions, making sure the toys are completely dry before allowing children to use them.

How long are dilutable disinfectants effective for after dilution?

Check the specific label. In general, if a disinfectant solution becomes visible dirty, it must be discarded. A few products at use-dilution have bactericidal stability for extended periods, like Symplicity Sanibet (up to 5 months) or Triforce (up to 1 year). Other diluted products on List N must be made fresh daily according to the EPA label.

How often should cleaning and disinfecting be done?

The CDC states, “Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people, such as door handles, bathroom surfaces, and handrails, should be cleaned with soap and water or another detergent at least daily when facilities are in use. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use. For example, certain surfaces and objects in public spaces, such as shopping carts and point of sale keypads, should be cleaned and disinfected before each use. Cleaning removes dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs, but it reduces the number of germs on a surface.”

Is there any residual efficacy after the disinfectant dries?

No, that is why it is important to disinfect high-touch surfaces and areas. Be wary of products that claim residual efficacy. These claims are only relevant to preserving the surface where they are applied (prevent odors or staining). They do not have residual viral efficacy and none of these products are recommended on List N.

How long do I leave the disinfectant on the surface?

All disinfectants have different and specific dwell times depending on the organism you are trying to kill. Refer to the EPA List N for the recommended dwell time for use against SARS-CoV-2.

I have heard the virus can spread on shoes, is this true?

A recent study published in *Emerging Infectious Diseases* suggests that SARS-CoV-2 can potentially be spread by shoes. In the study, researchers took samples from various surfaces at Huoshenshan Hospital in Wuhan, China, the early epicenter of the outbreak—including samples from the soles of ICU staff members' shoes. Half of the samples taken from the shoes tested positive for the virus.

This demonstrates the importance of disinfecting floors during corrective disinfection.

Do you need to wipe down surfaces after disinfecting?

This depends on the disinfectant and the surface. Most surfaces can be allowed to air dry. For sensitive surfaces like electronic equipment, after the required dwell time, it is advised to wipe any residue from the surface. Food-contact surfaces should be rinsed with potable water after disinfecting.

Is it safe to vacuum a facility after a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case has been present?

According to the CDC, “The risk of transmitting or spreading SARS-CoV-2 during vacuuming is unknown. At this time, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 associated with vacuuming. If vacuuming is necessary, first follow the CDC recommendations for [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#) that apply, which includes a wait time of 24 hours, or as long as practical.

“After cleaning and disinfection, the following recommendations may help reduce the risk to workers and other individuals when vacuuming:

- Consider removing smaller rugs or carpets from the area completely, so there is less that needs to be vacuumed.
- Use a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
- Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.
- Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.”

Do I need to disinfect the tools and equipment used after performing corrective disinfection?

Yes, it is advisable to disinfect all materials. Betco has a [guide to proper equipment disinfection](#).

Does the EPA regulate companies with cleaning services claiming to disinfect for COVID-19?

The EPA does not specifically regulate cleaning companies. However, if the company uses a product or makes an efficacy claim that cannot be backed up by an EPA registration, then that is a violation, and the company can be subject to substantial fines and penalties.

Why are there no skin care products on list N? / Can skin care products make COVID-19?

List N only includes EPA-registered surface disinfectants. Hand sanitizers, antiseptic washes, and antibacterial soaps are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). EPA-registered surface disinfectants, including surface wipes, SHOULD NOT be applied on your skin or ingested.

Only products approved as pharmaceutical drugs can legally make COVID-19 claims, not over-the-counter topical anesthetics, which skin care products are considered. The CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. It does not differentiate between different types of soaps (antibacterial or plain soap). When soap and water is unavailable use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Are non-alcohol hand sanitizers effective?

The CDC recommends using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and has stated, “Hand sanitizers without 60-95% alcohol 1) may not work equally well for many types of germs; and 2) merely reduce the growth of germs rather than kill them outright.”

STEP FOUR: CRITICAL TOUCH POINTS

What surfaces should I disinfect?

All reachable hard, non-porous surfaces can be disinfected, but high-touch surfaces should be paid special attention. These include but are not limited to tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. To see a list of touch points, [click here](#).

Not all disinfectants are appropriate for use on medical devices or food-contact surfaces. Disinfectants that are suitable for use on these surfaces may, furthermore, require additional actions, such as rinsing after disinfection. This information will be located on the product label.

How long can SARS-CoV-2 survive on various surfaces?

According to an NIH (National Institute of Health) study, SARS-CoV-2 remained active on plastic and stainless-steel surfaces for 2–3 days under the conditions in this experiment. It remained infectious for up to 24 hours on cardboard and 4 hours on copper. The virus was detectable in aerosols (in the air) for up to 3 hours. These times will vary under real-world conditions, depending on factors including temperature, humidity, ventilation, and the amount of virus deposited.

What is the recommendation for areas that cannot be disinfected, like paper or cardboard (that break down when wet)?

Since the virus has only been shown to survive for 24 hours on these surfaces, it is best to remove these items to a secure spot and not handle them for a few days.

Should outdoor playgrounds in schools and parks be disinfected?

From the CDC, “Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. Spraying disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public.”

Is it recommended to disinfect roads or sidewalks to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

CDC does not recommend disinfection of sidewalks or roads. Spraying disinfectant on sidewalks and roads is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public. The risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 from these surfaces is very low and disinfection is not effective on these surfaces.

Is it necessary to disinfect the duct work in the ventilation system?

It is not necessary to disinfect the HVAC system, including ductwork. We are focusing on the high-touch points.



STEP FIVE: DOCUMENTATION OF TASKS PERFORMED

Does an ATP meter show the virus is killed?

An ATP meter shows how much organic material has been removed from a surface and is a good measure of cleaning performance. It cannot show if there are any microorganisms present or what those specific organisms are. The only way to do this is to swab the surface, transfer to a growth plate, and check for growth over 24–48 hours. This is normally done in a microbiology laboratory.