

What is safe and effective use of bleach?

EPA Standard Definitions

Clean The process that physically removes debris from the surface or area by scrubbing, washing and rinsing. It may be accomplished with soap or detergent and water.

Sanitize Product that kills 99.9% germs identified on its label

Disinfect Product that kills nearly 100% of germs identified on its label.

When used appropriately, much of the risk of harm from bleach can be reduced.
Follow these steps when preparing and using bleach to sanitize:

To safely prepare bleach dilutions:

- Dilute bleach with cool water and do not use more than the recommended amount of bleach.
- Make a fresh bleach dilution daily; label the bottle with contents and the date mixed.
- Wear gloves and eye protection when diluting bleach.
- Use a funnel.
- Add bleach to the water rather than water to bleach to reduce fumes.
- Make sure the room is well ventilated.
- Never mix or store ammonia with bleach or products that contain bleach.

To safely use bleach solutions:

- Apply the bleach dilution *after* cleaning the surface with soap or detergent and rinsing with water.
- Allow for a two-minute contact time or air dry.
- Sanitize with bleach when children are not present.
- Ventilate the room and allow the surfaces to completely dry before allowing children back into the area.
- Store all chemicals in a secure area, out of reach of children and in a way that they will not tip and spill.

Recommended Bleach Dilutions

For food contact surface sanitizing (refrigerators, freezers, plastic cutting boards, stainless cutlery, dishes, glassware, countertops, pots and pans, stainless utensils, toys that have been mouthed, high chair trays)

1 Tablespoon of bleach to a gallon of water.

Let stand for 2 minutes or air dry.

For nonporous surface sanitizing and disinfecting

1/4 cup of bleach to one gallon of water or 1 tablespoon per quart.

Let stand for 2 minutes or air dry.

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