



# What Infection Preventionists Need to Know About Disinfectants



## Take these steps for safe and effective disinfectant use:



- **Check your product** for an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved number
  - Find the EPA registration number on the label (note: if there isn't a number, it's a cleaner, not a disinfectant. Cleaners remove dirt, and disinfectants kill germs. Both steps are necessary.)
  - Confirm the disinfectant is on the EPA's list of approved disinfectants (see link on page 2)



- **Check the label to identify the germs it kills (e.g., bacteria, virus, fungi)**
  - The label will also explain if the product should be diluted and gives instructions for correct dilution



- Remember that the **disinfectant can't work until the surface is clean**
  - Typically, the same product can be used for both steps



- **Make sure the surface is wet for the entire contact time**
  - A general rule of thumb is to go with the longest contact time listed on the label



- **Make sure staff use the required personal protective equipment (PPE)**
  - Use appropriate PPE as listed on the disinfectant label
  - Cleaning rooms of patients on Contact or Enhanced Standard Precautions may require gowns and gloves



- **Ensure cleaning cart is locked**
  - Locking cleaning carts prevents unauthorized access to disinfectant products



# Practices to Avoid For Disinfectant Use

- Don't mix or dilute the disinfectant unless specified on the label.
- Don't "top off" or add new solution to containers containing old solution.
- Don't mix different disinfectants! For example, don't mix bleach with quaternary ammonium compounds ("quats") or any other disinfectants. This can create a hazardous situation.
- Avoid using spray bottles.
- Rather than using cotton cloths to apply disinfectants, use saturated microfiber cloths.



Scan to access EVS training materials to train EVS staff.



Scan for more information on EPA's list of approved disinfectants.

See List K for disinfectants effective against *Clostridioides difficile*.  
See List P for disinfectants effective against *Candida auris*.

## Notes:

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Scan here for a PDF version of this worksheet!

Tip: Turn it into a badge buddy or breakroom flyer!

