Using Disinfectants to Control the COVID-19 Virus

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This guidance is for the public and professionals to control the COVID-19 virus on surfaces. The coronavirus named “SARS-CoV-2” is the cause of “COVID-19” in people.

This information applies to sprays, surface wipes, and other liquids. You may see them called “antimicrobials”, “disinfectants”, or “biocides” on product labels.

Antimicrobial Products List

There are currently no EPA-registered disinfectants that specifically include the SARS-CoV-2 virus on the product label. Refer to the following list from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for products that control the virus:

List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2
https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

Using products effectively:

- To kill the virus, the surface must stay wet for the entire time on the label. Look for “contact time” or “dwell time”.
- Surface wipes can dry out during use. They must remain wet to be effective.
- Each product has only been shown to work where the label says it can be used. Look for “use sites” on the label.
- Disinfectants may not work on all surfaces. Follow the label carefully. Examples of surface types are listed in Table 1 below.
- “Cleaning” wipes do not kill viruses. They do not make claims to disinfect and are not registered by the U.S. EPA.

Consider these steps to reduce your risk when using disinfectants:

- To avoid chemical exposure when using disinfectants, follow the label’s “precautionary statements”. If no label guidance is provided, consider wearing gloves, eye protection, shoes with socks, and long sleeves/pants.
- Keep children, pets, and other people away during the application until the product is dry and there is no odor.
- Open windows and use fans to ventilate. Step away from odors if they become too strong.
- Wash your hands after using any disinfectant, including surface wipes.
- Keep lids tightly closed when not in use. Spills and accidents are more likely to happen when containers are open.
- Do not allow children to use disinfectant wipes. Keep cleaners and disinfectants out of reach from children and pets.
- Throw away disposable items like gloves and masks after use. They cannot be cleaned.
- Do not use disinfectant wipes to clean hands or as baby wipes.

Additional Resources:

2. Interim guidance for environmental cleaning in non-healthcare facilities exposed to SARS-CoV-2 – European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control