

# SAFER DISINFECTING IN CHILD CARE FACILITIES: COVID-19 PART 2

*Toxic ingredients in cleaning and disinfecting products can make indoor air unhealthy to breathe for staff and children.*

For comprehensive guidance on screening, social distancing and other COVID-19 best practices consult the [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov).

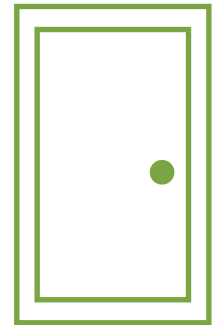
- Many of the best practices outlined below are strategies used in the [Caring for Our Children National Standards](#).
- Remember to check the latest advice from state, local, and federal health agencies.

**NOTE: This guidance is applicable to both family child care and center-based child care settings.**

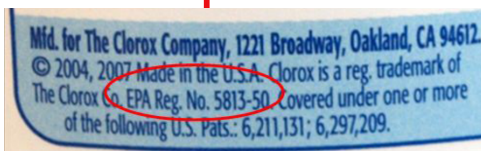
## DISINFECT HIGH-TOUCH SURFACES

Child care facilities should disinfect "high-touch", hard and non-porous surfaces. High-touch surfaces and objects can include: toys, games, doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap pads, toilet training potties, desks, chairs, and cubbies. A disinfectant is a product that destroys most germs. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has created a cleaning and [disinfecting decision tool](#) to assist child care facilities in their cleaning and disinfecting practices. Note--a surface is only disinfected until someone comes along and touches it, sneezes or coughs on it or breathes on it.

Remember to always clean first--then disinfect.



An EPA registered disinfectant has an EPA registration number on the label.



## SELECT EPA REGISTERED, FRAGRANCE-FREE DISINFECTANTS

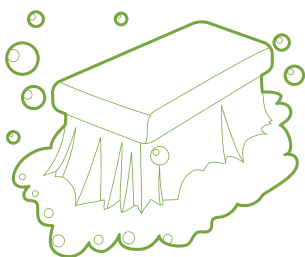
If you determine disinfecting is necessary, select an [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) registered, fragrance-free disinfectant that has less harmful substances such as: Ethanol, Isopropanol, Hydrogen Peroxide, L-Lactic Acid or Citric Acid.

Choose products with these active ingredients from EPA's List N Disinfectants for Use Against SARS CoV-2, (the virus that causes COVID-19). You can search for safer disinfectants using [EPA's List N Tool](#).

## DISINFECTANTS ARE PESTICIDES

Disinfectants are pesticides and labeled not for use by children. Children should not participate in disinfecting activities. Disinfectants should not be used on items that children put in their mouths. These items should be sanitized with a food contact sanitizer. You can also sanitize items in the dishwasher.



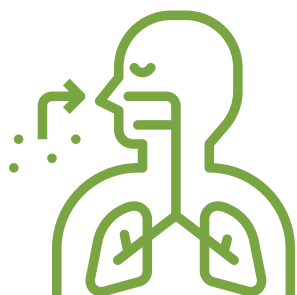


## CONTACT TIME

For all disinfectants it is important the product remains wet on the surface for the recommended contact or “dwell time”. Follow the directions on the product label to determine the contact time. More information regarding dilution and contact time instructions for disinfectants is provided in [Appendix J](#) and [K of Caring for Our Children](#).

## DISINFECTANT WIPES

Disinfectant wipes should only be used on surfaces listed on the label. They should not be used on food or to clean hands. Do not let children use disinfectant wipes.



## BLEACH

When EPA-approved safer disinfectants are not available, alternative disinfectants such as diluted bleach can be used.

Disinfectants such as bleach and those containing quaternary ammonium compounds or “Quats” should not be used when children and adolescents are present, because these are known respiratory irritants. Bleach and quats can also cause asthma and reproductive problems.

## CHOOSE EPA REGISTERED, FRAGRANCE-FREE HOUSEHOLD BLEACH

If you are using bleach choose an EPA registered, fragrance-free, household bleach--not laundry bleach. Any leftover bleach solution should be discarded at the end of the day as it will lose effectiveness.



## HOW TO MIX A BLEACH SOLUTION

How to mix an effective bleach solution: Read the label to find the concentration of sodium hypochlorite (bleach) in the product to make sure you are using the right dilution ratio or correct amount of bleach and water. Use a funnel when mixing bleach solution to reduce exposure to fumes. Always use the personal protective equipment indicated on the Safety Data Sheet when mixing bleach.

Contact Poison Control right away if you suspect a poisoning.  
 Help is available online with [webPOISONCONTROL](http://webPOISONCONTROL)®  
 or by phone at 1-800-222-1222.

