

# Cleaning guidelines to help prevent the spread of COVID-19

From disinfecting to stocking the right supplies, here's what you need to know.

If you're continuing to host. It is important to revisit your cleaning routine to make sure you're doing what you can to protect yourself and your guests.

In our bid to help, so we've put together some guidelines based on insight and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## Why cleaning is more important than ever

Cleanliness has always been top of mind for hosts and guests. But it's even more critical as we all aim to reduce the spread of infection. According to the CDC, it's possible for someone to contract COVID-19 by touching a contaminated surface—like a doorknob or light switch—and the virus may live on some surfaces for several hours or even days. That's why it's essential to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces often, especially between reservations.

Note: The CDC recommends that people wait 24 hours before entering a space occupied by a person who may have been exposed to the coronavirus. The 24-hour waiting period gives time to properly clean and disinfect all areas accessible to the guest, and an additional buffer.

## The difference between disinfecting and cleaning

When it comes to preventing the spread of germs, it helps to understand the difference between cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning is the act of removing germs, dirt, and impurities (like when you use a soapy sponge to wipe off a visibly dirty counter or stovetop). Disinfecting is when you use chemicals to kill germs (like spraying with a bleach solution). By cleaning first, then disinfecting, you can lower the risk of infection.

## Follow these cleaning guidelines

Here are some guidelines to follow when cleaning your space between guests. If you work with a cleaning professional, instruct them to use this list, too.

1. **Wear protective gear while you clean.** Personal protective items like disposable gloves, aprons or gowns, and facial coverings (like homemade or purchased masks) can provide additional protection. Make sure to wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
2. **Ventilate rooms before you clean.** The CDC recommends opening outside doors and windows and using ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the space before beginning to clean and disinfect.
3. **Wash your hands thoroughly before and after each cleaning.** Use soap and water, and wash for at least 20 seconds. If that's not possible, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
4. **Clean, then disinfect. Use detergent or soap and water to remove dirt, grease, dust, and germs.** Once the surface is clean, spray with a disinfectant. Let it stand for a few minutes, then

wipe—and if you're not using paper towels or disposable wipes, it's best to use a new cleaning cloth for each guest.

5. **Avoid touching your face while cleaning.** To prevent the spread of germs, the CDC recommends not touching your face, nose, and eyes with unwashed hands—so pay extra attention when cleaning.
6. **Use the right disinfectant.** Most common household disinfectants registered by the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as cleaning solutions with diluted household bleach or at least 70% alcohol, are believed to be effective against the coronavirus. Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, like light switches, doorknobs, remote controls, and faucet handles. (See our full list of surfaces to disinfect at the bottom of the page.)
7. **Don't forget about sofas, rugs, drapes, and other soft, porous surfaces.** Carefully remove any visible dirt or grime, then clean with the appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. If possible, machine-wash items according to the manufacturer's instructions.
8. **Wash all linens at the highest heat setting recommended by the manufacturer.** That includes bed sheets, mattress covers, hand and bath towels, kitchen towels, and blankets. Remember to wear gloves when handling dirty laundry, and take care to avoid shaking laundry, which could increase the spread of germs.
9. **Clean and disinfect laundry baskets and hampers.** If possible, consider using a liner that is either disposable or that you can throw into the washing machine.
10. **Empty the vacuum cleaner** after every cleaning. You should wipe down the vacuum cleaner with disinfectant, along with appliances like your dishwasher and washing machine.
11. **While restocking your supplies, take a moment to check expiration dates.** And remember to never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleaning solution that can release toxic gases that are dangerous to inhale.
12. **Line trash cans.** Placing bags into trash bins will make it easier to dispose of tissues and other waste.
13. **Dispose of or wash your cleaning supplies.** If you're using paper towels, disinfectant wipes, and other disposable cleaning supplies, take the trash out after you're done. If you're using cleaning cloths and other reusable products, make sure to machine-wash them at the highest heat setting appropriate for the material.
14. **Safely remove any cleaning gear.** When you're done cleaning, immediately remove any protective outerwear like gowns, gloves, or masks, and dispose of them or wash accordingly. Remember to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds afterwards.

## Helping guests protect themselves

Like you, many guests will want to take extra steps to reduce their risk of infection. You can help encourage social distancing placing visual reminders. You can also minimize person-to-person contact by avoiding routine maintenance during your guest's stay.

To help guests maintain a higher standard of cleanliness and hygiene, make sure your space is well-stocked with the essential amenities, and consider adding a few extras. Things like:

- Hand soap
- Paper towels
- Tissues
- Toilet Paper

Be sure to stock plenty of extra towels and sheets, especially for guests who are staying for more than a few days. You can encourage guests to clean up after themselves by leaving disinfectants and other cleaning supplies for them. You may even want to print and share the above cleaning guidelines so that if they decide to clean or wash linens, they can do so according to the CDC's guidelines.

### Telling guests about your enhanced cleaning routine

Guests will want to know about all of the additional steps you're taking to reduce the spread of infection. So it's a good idea to mention your enhanced cleaning routine in your listing description. If you do, please be careful about the words you choose—while it's okay to say that you're taking extra care to disinfect your space due to COVID-19, you can't make unsubstantiated claims, like calling your space "COVID-free."