

6 Common Ideas About Disinfecting That Are Actually Wrong



Sanitizing Equals Disinfecting

Although people often use both terms as synonyms, there are small but significant differences. While sanitizing reduces the number of germs on a surface, disinfecting kills 99.999% of them—including viruses.

Vinegar Is An Effective Disinfectant

Most organizations (if not all) don't consider vinegar a disinfectant. Although it can kill specific foodborne bacteria and reduce the number of viruses on a surface, vinegar isn't as effective as other products.



Plant-Based Disinfectants Don't Work

As long as a plant-based disinfectant is approved, it is effective and safe to use. For example, in concentrations between 60-80%, ethanol (alcohol made from plants) kills viruses like influenza and rhinovirus.

Disinfectants Work Immediately

As good as it would be that disinfectants kill germs on the spot, they don't. Disinfectants need a contact time to work properly, ranging from 30 seconds to 30 minutes. Check the label on your products for specifics.



All Cleaning Products Disinfect

Cleaning means removing dirt from surfaces, displacing germs but not necessarily killing them. In other words, cleaning products sanitize but don't disinfect. However, some products fulfill both roles; read the label to be sure!

Disinfectants Work On Every Surface

You can spray a disinfectant on fabrics and upholstery, but the solution won't get deep enough to kill all germs. Most chemical-based disinfection methods are designed to be used only on non-porous surfaces.

