How do I protect my family and myself from germs found on surfaces?

Here are some ways to protect you and your family.

Did you know germs (bacteria and viruses) can spread from surfaces when you touch them?

Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Wear a mask and keep 6 feet apart.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
What is the best way to remove germs from surfaces?

- Clean surfaces in your home regularly.
- Use soap or detergent and water. Scrub vigorously.
- Clean with soap and water.
- Clean with soap and water.
- Use a microfiber cloth when cleaning to remove the most germs.
- Microfiber cloths can be reused. Wash in the washing machine separately or in the sink after each use.
What is the difference between cleaners and disinfectants?

Cleaners remove germs and dirt.

Disinfectants kill most germs.

Bleach and quaternary ammonium are commonly used disinfectants that can be dangerous.

Disinfectants can lead to health problems if misused.

Disinfectants can affect a person's lungs or ability to breathe normally.

Keep cleaners and disinfectants away from children.
How do I know when to clean or disinfect?

Only use disinfectants when and where necessary.

If no one is sick at home, clean surfaces.

If no one is sick at home, consider disinfecting high-touch surfaces.

Always clean before you disinfect so the disinfectant can do its job.

If someone is sick (or may be sick), clean first, then disinfect shared and high touch surfaces.

Only use disinfectants when and where necessary.
How do I choose safer disinfectants?

Look for safer options when choosing disinfectants. Just because it’s safer, doesn’t mean it is safe.

Look for active ingredients on the labels. Avoid products with words like “Danger” or “Poison.”

Look for safer active ingredients: ethanol, isopropanol, hydrogen peroxide, α-lactic acid, citric acid, sodium bisulfate, peroxyacetic acid.

You can check ingredients for “Design for the Environment,” disinfectants at the EPA website: www.epa.gov/pesticide-labels/design-certified-disinfectants.

For all disinfectants, follow the directions on the label.

Apply to surface and leave glistening wet for the time listed on the product label – also known as “wet time,” “dwell time,” or “contact time.”

For all disinfectants, follow the directions on the label.
How can I use disinfectants safely?

There are many ways to protect you and your family when using disinfectants.

Open windows and doors when possible to increase air flow.

Avoid using these products when children are near.

Store cleaners, disinfectants, and cleaning tools out of reach of children.

Use gloves and glasses or goggles for eye protection when using disinfectants.

Put the nationwide poison control center phone number, 1-800-222-1222, on or near every telephone in your home and program it into your cell phone.