

Spring cleaning takes on a new importance during COVID-19 pandemic

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released

reopening guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, workplaces, businesses, schools and homes.

Dr. Gregory Poland, a Mayo Clinic infectious diseases expert, suggests taking a practical approach to spring cleaning. If no one in your household has been infected, he says standard spring cleaning practices will be sufficient. However, if someone in the household was sick or presumed infected, it's important to take extra care when cleaning and disinfecting.

"The key thing when we clean, when we disinfect a surface, is that we put gloves on, we don't mix chemicals and we use any of the standard EPA-authorized disinfectants. Or you can make your own with a 1/3 of a cup of bleach and a gallon of water. Use that to clean hard surfaces. These are not chemicals that you should put on your skin or ingest or sniff or anything like that, but for the hard surfaces in your home," says Dr. Poland.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can be killed if you use the right products. The Environmental Protection Agency has compiled a list of disinfectant products that can be used against COVID-19, including ready-to-use sprays, concentrates and wipes. Each product has been shown to be effective against viruses that are harder to kill than viruses like the one that causes COVID-19.

For those wanting to avoid harsh chemical cleaners and/or expensive products, Dr. Poland says soap and water is extremely effective.

"Soap and water for enveloped viruses—and SARS-CoV-2 is an [enveloped virus](#)—will kill the virus or inactivate it very easily. The advantage of soap and water is you're not going to harm yourself and you're not going to discolor anything," says Dr. Poland. "The soap molecules actually get into the lipid membrane of the virus and

inactivate it. On the one hand, you're inactivating the [virus](#) and, on the other hand, physically removing it off the surface."

Dr. Poland says spring is also a good time to change any [air filters](#) in your furnace or ducts."We're not trying to make people into germophobes as much as a clear recognition that there are particular times when you and your family and other people are at risk, such as influenza season, if we're going to have a recurrence of COVID-19 in the winter, those are things that we're going to have to attend to and deal with," says Dr. Poland.

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