

Common household items you should clean, but probably don't

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When battling the coronavirus, experts agree that cleanliness and personal hygiene are key. According to the **Center for Disease Control**, the best way to avoid coming down with COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to the virus. This means you should not only wash your hands regularly and keep your distance from strangers, but you should also be mindful of the items in your daily life with which you frequently come into contact, but maybe don't get cleaned as often as they should.

Quick clean items:

The following items can be sanitized with a quick scrub using Lysol, Clorox or another cleaner. More on which alternative cleaners are the best to use below.

- Doorknobs
- Table and desktops
- Chair backs
- Sink and shower/bath faucet levers
- Light switches (both on the wall and on lamps themselves)
- Toilet handles
- Car door handles

The following items may need a little special attention and care to safely clean:

- **Cell phones, tablets and cases:** First and foremost, do not dunk your phone or tablet in any kind of liquid. A clean, dead phone does no one any good. You should also avoid spraying any cleaner directly on your phone. **Apple recommends** using a 70% isopropyl alcohol wipe, a Clorox disinfecting wipe, or soft, lint-free wipe dipped in cleaner. Avoid abrasive cloths or paper towels. Don't forget your phone case. In many cases, the usual cleaning products or soapy water will do the trick. If your case is leather, see the next item on the list...
- **Leather goods like wallets and purses:** You CAN clean leather goods with rubbing alcohol or Clorox wipes. Just remember that real leather is made from animal hide. Weird, but true. So, you should care for it like you would your own skin. After cleaning, hit it with a bit of leather moisturizer to keep it healthy.

- **Remote controls and video game controllers:** Before cleaning, remove the batteries. Then, replace the battery cover to clean. Wait till the remote or game controller is dry before replacing the batteries. Use a toothpick to get some of the grime out of the more hard-to-reach crevices.
- **Cloth purses, tote bags, reusable shopping bags:** Just toss these items in the washing machine. Some items may have specific care instructions requiring air drying. Some plastic or nylon shopping bags may need to be hand washed with warm, soapy water. See their care tags for details.

While we're talking about it, can I clean myself with Lysol?

NO. Do not use Lysol or Clorox type sprays to disinfect your skin. Lysol can be dangerous when inhaled or ingested, or if it comes into contact with your eyes. Get some soap or hand sanitizer and wash those hands.

What if I don't have Lysol or Clorox wipes or spray?

In previous times, common household cleaners like Clorox and Lysol may have been the most readily available and effective means of sanitizing against the coronavirus. But now, most store shelves have been completely cleared out of these products. Don't panic. If you were not able to get your hands on a stash of Lysol wipes, there are alternatives.

Options include:

- Diluting household bleach: Mix 5 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup) per gallon of water. OR 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water.

Here is what the **CDC says about using bleach:**

"Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser."

- Alcohol solutions containing at least 70% alcohol. Isopropyl alcohol, commonly referred to as rubbing alcohol, is also generally safe for use on skin. It is also flammable, so be mindful of any open flames when using it.

The CDC and the Environmental Protection Agency have also put together a complete list of products approved to fight the novel coronavirus. **CLICK HERE to read that list.**