

Throughout the day, all the bacteria you touch on grocery carts, gas pumps, doorknobs and even other people is transferred to our phones and other devices.

People who share common devices (telephones, keyboards, copiers, printers) risk sharing colds, flu and other respiratory infections. Sanitization of shared devices in work areas protects workers against acquiring infections, thereby safeguarding their health and minimizing lost work time.

Sanitization Steps

Step 1: Cleaning — the removal of soil from devices

This may be a manual or automated process. It is often a manual preliminary cleaning, scrubbing process, sometimes supplemented by steam cleaning.

Step 2: Disinfection — the destruction of pathogenic microorganisms that can cause disease

This step requires: (1) the use of appropriate antibacterial chemicals (2) applied in a proper manner (3) for the recommended amount of time to destroy the microorganisms.

Equipment and Supplies

Healthcare grade liquid or spray disinfectant: for cleaning, not supplies designed for home use

Homemade disinfectant

Fill an empty spray bottle with:

- 1/3 bottle: Isopropyl rubbing alcohol (70% alcohol) – will kill germs with less potential for damage than bleach; Solutions with less than 70% alcohol are not effective against germs.
- 1/3 bottle: Vinegar
- 1/3 bottle: Hot water

Don't spray directly on the device; spray on a cloth – preferably a microfiber cloth – and then wipe down the device.

Medical grade antibacterial wipes: effective for electronic or other small devices (especially phones, keyboards, mice, etc.). Contact time determines effectiveness. In some cases, you can cover a device with a wipe and leave it for a few minutes. Many wipes contain bleach, which is effective, but not allowed in some settings (e.g., schools).

Ultraviolet (UV light) disinfection: This line-of-sight irradiation is not deemed appropriate to replace manual cleaning and disinfection with chemicals, but it is useful for soft-sided items (cases, backpacks, etc.)

- What is unique about UV-C radiation is that it is especially effective at disinfection. In particular, it is incredibly impressive at killing germs, viruses and bacteria. UV-C lamps can be used in air to disinfect surfaces. Black light/fluorescent light (UV-A light) does not kill germs. UV-C light does.
- UV-C light destroys bacteria, viruses and other harmful microbes by damaging their DNA so they can't multiply.
- Feel free to stick your phone in a UV-emitting cleaning chamber (and be sure to clean all your gadgets daily if you use them often) – but as for personal hygiene, you should stick to soap and water.

Helpful Tips

1. Consult the manufacturer care instructions before cleaning. It will include instructions on what materials to use and how to best clean devices.
2. Be sure to remove extra moisture from disinfectant wipes as this keeps it from seeping into the device and causing damage.
3. Be gentle. Don't use excessive force when cleaning electronics as this may also cause damage to the device.