

COVID-19 Cleaning & Disinfecting

What is Cleaning vs. Disinfecting?

Cleaning means to physically remove germs (bacteria and viruses), dirt and grime from surfaces using a detergent and water solution. A detergent is a surfactant that is designed to break up oil and grease with the use of water. **Disinfecting** means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. It's important to clean before disinfecting because dirt and grime can reduce the ability of disinfectants to kill germs. It is recommended to regularly clean and disinfect surfaces that many people touch.

Is COVID-19 Relatively Easy to Kill (When Disinfecting)?

Yes. COVID-19 is an enveloped virus, which means it has an outer membrane. Enveloped viruses are relatively easy to kill compared to non-enveloped viruses, as the outer layer is easily damaged by most environmental disinfectants, provided the disinfectant is used in accordance with label directions (TGA, 2020).

Should You Be Disinfecting with a TGA Listed Disinfectant?

No. The Department of Health only recommends the use of a hospital grade disinfectant when disinfecting in a hospital or healthcare setting if an infectious patient has been present. (Safe Work Australia, 2020).

What Disinfectant is Required?

Disinfectants containing $\geq 70\%$ alcohol, quaternary ammonium compounds (such as benzalkonium chloride) or diluted household bleach (including products containing sodium hypochlorite) are suitable for use (TGA, 2020; Safe Work Australia, 2020).

Why Do Hospitals Use TGA Listed Disinfectants? Are They More Effective Disinfectants?

Health Care facilities are regulated to use TGA Listed Disinfectants that are listed on the TGA maintained Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG). Products on this list are not necessarily more effective than products that are not on that list. Simply put, these are products that are approved for use in Health Care Facilities.

I've Seen Products That Say 'Kills COVID-19'. Are They More Effective?

No, not necessarily. Products that have claims such as 'kills COVID-19' are specific claims that the TGA approve based on testing of the ARTG Listed Disinfectant against surrogate viruses as per Guidelines for Disinfectants under Therapeutic Goods Order 104. A surrogate virus is a substitute used when the virus in question is too difficult to replicate or too dangerous for lab staff in terms of risk of infection, which is the case for COVID-19 as there is no known vaccine at this point in time. These claims are important for Health Care Facilities who must use ARTG listed disinfectants that are appropriate for environmental cleaning and disinfection for their situation.

Beyond Health Care, the TGA details that enveloped viruses (COVID-19) are relatively easy to kill by most environmental disinfectants and outside of Health Care, workplaces should use disinfectants including, but not limited to, quaternary ammonium compounds (QAC's).

What is in Activate Sanitiser No Rinse?

Activate Sanitiser No Rinse contains what is known as a 5th generation quaternary ammonium compound (QAC), this formulation is a superior product when compared to previous generations and is the best performing amongst all quat-based disinfectants. It contains Benzalkonium Chloride, commonly used as an example by the TGA and Safe Work Australia as an appropriate QAC for use against COVID-19.

References:

<https://www.tga.gov.au/appropriate-use-disinfectants-information-consumers-health-professionals-and-healthcare-facilities>

https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/cleaning#heading--19--tab-toc-should_i_be_using_hospital_grade_disinfectant_for_normal_cleaning_in_the_workplace?