Safety Guidance for Cleaning & Disinfecting for COVID-19 (and in general)

The best way to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is to protect yourself and others from being exposed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has put out helpful guidance on protecting yourself from COVID-19 and specific information for people with asthma.

While we’re all cleaning more than ever at home and at work, it’s important to remember safe cleaning & disinfecting practices to protect your health and the health of those around you. Inappropriate use of cleaning products can cause mild to severe asthma symptoms, new onset of asthma, and other health issues!

- **Protect yourself** by wearing waterproof cleaning gloves and masks if available. Chemicals and fragrances in cleaning products (including aerosols and wipes) can irritate skin, eyes, and lungs, so avoid direct contact and use the least toxic product whenever possible*.
- **Wash your hands** with soap & water for at least 20 seconds immediately after cleaning. Wash hands immediately and throw away protective wear if damaged or soiled with bodily fluids.
- **Ventilate well** during and after cleaning (ex: opening windows) no matter what the product.
- **Protect others** in your household by cleaning when others aren’t around or moving household members to a different room while you clean. Store cleaning materials away from food and cooking, and out of reach of children and pets.
- **Never mix products**! (ex: chlorine or bleach plus ammonia can produce deadly gases!)

*The CDC recommends this searchable list of EPA-approved disinfectants that are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder-to-kill viruses.

We recognize that product choices may be limited at this time. Whenever possible, try to avoid products with the following ingredients, which can cause asthma symptoms or new onset of asthma with repeated use:

- Fragrance, scents, or dyes – choose unscented when you can!
- Quaternary ammonium compounds or “Quats”
- Ammonia
- Bleach

Preparing household disinfectants:

**Alcohol solutions:** Use solutions with at least 70% alcohol.

**Bleach solutions:** Mix 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water OR mix 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water.

No matter what the product, always follow the manufacturer’s instructions for dilution, application, and proper ventilation. You can also read the CDC guidance on cleaning & disinfecting for coronavirus, including recommended bleach or alcohol solutions when necessary.

More Detailed Guidance Here:

- MassCOSH Comprehensive Information on COVID-19: Guidance & materials for workers
- BPHC Guidance on PPE for Frontline Staff: Safe use & disposal of personal protective wear