

COVID-19: Cleaning

Cleaning tips for consideration during the COVID-19 outbreak

COVID-19 (coronavirus) is transferred through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. In a collective effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus), we're all spending a lot more time at home than usual. Lung Foundation Australia recommend all Australians living with a lung disease or lung cancer stay home where possible and practice social distancing when performing essential activities, because people living with chronic conditions or who are immunocompromised are at greater risk of a serious infection from coronavirus.

COVID-19 can spread through contaminated objects and scientists have discovered that the virus can survive on surfaces for hours and potentially even days. Although it is not the main cause of the spread, it is possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object where droplets from an infected person have landed and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes.

We know many of you will already be self-isolating, but if you live with someone who is still leaving the house or have a carer visiting your home, you might want to consider some additional preventative measures.

Cleaning may feel overwhelming if you are suffering from shortness of breath or fatigue. Use pacing strategies – you don't have to complete it all at once – attempt cleaning one item or room, then have a break. If there is someone else in your household that can do the cleaning, encourage them to assist with the additional preventative measures.

If you have a carer who assists with cleaning and/or tasks of living, encourage them to:

- Take off their shoes before they enter your home
- Wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds as soon as they enter your home, and then regularly for the duration of their visit
- Clean any high-touch surfaces that they use, such as doorknobs and light switches
- Practice social distancing within the home.

Clean high-touch surfaces and objects

Wipe down all frequently touched surfaces and regularly handled objects with a detergent solution.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Tables
- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Countertops
- Desks
- Toilets

- Faucets
- Sinks
- Keys

Consider using an antibacterial wipe to clean electronics, such as telephones and mobiles, TV remotes, keyboards and tablets, but always follow manufacturer's instructions to avoid any damage.

Practice good hand hygiene, even at home

We've heard it many times but washing your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds throughout the day is one of our best lines of defence. Infection may occur if you touch a contaminated surface and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes. Remember, this is especially important if you've been out of the house.

Take your shoes off before you enter the home

It's no surprise that shoes are a breeding ground for germs. Removing shoes before entering the home or having designated indoor and outdoor shoes is a good precaution to take, especially for families with children who may be playing on the floor.

Designate an area for keys, wallets and phones

Decide on a designated space in your home for frequently used items that leave the house such as keys, wallets, phones and sunglasses. It's a good idea to choose one area to store them in and ensure you wash your hands after touching them.

Take care when touching items brought in from outside

During this time, don't assume everyone is following best-practice hygiene measures. If you are unpacking groceries, avoid touching your face and wash your hands immediately afterwards.

Clean your mobile phone

If you're like most people, you probably touch your phone often and at times hold it up to your face while on calls.

Here are some tips for keeping your phone clean:

- Clean your phone regularly with antibacterial wipes
- Avoid letting others touch your phone; if they do, make sure they wash their hands before and afterwards

To avoid damage to your device, consult the manufacturer's website for any specific instructions that they might have. You may find they have provided specific instructions for cleaning your device during the pandemic, such as Apple.

What products to use?

There is a lot of information available about which products you should be using to clean your home. Cleaning and disinfecting are advised to help limit the spread of the virus and most everyday cleaning products will be suitable for thorough cleaning, but to kill the virus, a disinfectant is needed.

Cleaning products can irritate sensitive airways. If you are the person living with a lung condition and doing the cleaning, ensure the house is well ventilated by opening windows and turning on any fans.

If someone else is able to do the cleaning, still ventilate your home, but you may wish to sit outside during the cleaning process as well as for a period of time afterwards.

It is important to note that natural cleaning products (e.g. vinegar) are not as effective as commercial cleaners and disinfectants. Most natural or "eco-cleaners" are unlikely to kill the virus. Be careful not to mix different cleaning products, as this can create dangerous solutions that are likely to be ineffective.

Either dispose of, or wash any re-useable cloths and wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds afterwards.

Remember, practicing social distancing and good personal hygiene is the best way to reduce the spread of the virus, so don't let these measures overwhelm you. Stay connected and reach out to your loved ones for support, even if it is just for a virtual cup of tea. Lung Foundation Australia is also here to provide information, support and guidance about COVID-19 or your lung health. Contact our Information and Support Centre team via free call 1800 654 301 (option 3).