

How to Disinfect Your Devices

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With the [coronavirus COVID-19](#) making its way through communities around the world, health experts are recommending that you take special care to clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched throughout the day.^[1] Phones, tablets, and computers are all high-touch surfaces that can accumulate dirt, grime, germs, and viruses, putting you at risk for getting sick.^[2] However, realize that the risk of coronavirus spreading via surfaces is low.^[3] Fortunately, disinfecting your device is as easy as wiping it down with a soft cloth or wipe and a little bit of alcohol-based disinfectant!

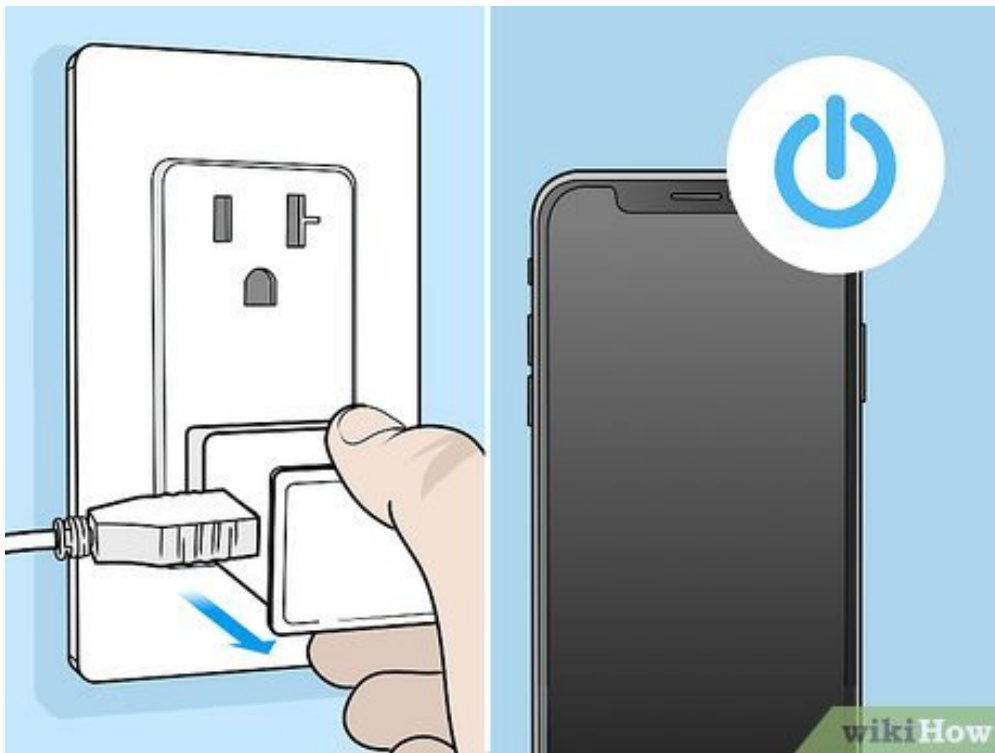
Method 1

Method 1 of 2: Disinfecting Phones and Tablets



1 Disinfect your device after taking it out in public. Unless there's someone sick in your home, your device isn't likely to pick up too many dangerous germs and viruses from regular home use. However, your risk increases when you use it in public after touching other surfaces. If you've recently been out and about, disinfect your phone when you get back home.^[4]

- Avoid using your phone while you're in the restroom, especially in public places. Keep your phone inside your bag or pocket when you go into a public restroom to prevent contamination.



2 Unplug and power down your device before you clean it. Disconnect your phone or tablet from its charger, headphones, or any other cable devices.^[5] Once your device is unplugged, shut it down completely.^[6]

- Turning off your device will help reduce the possibility of damage in case a little moisture gets inside.
- Unplugging your device can also reduce the risk of electric shock.



3 Rub away debris and fingerprints with a soft microfiber cloth. Before disinfecting your phone or tablet, remove obvious grease, dirt, and debris. Use a dry, soft, lint-free microfiber cleaning cloth to wipe all the surfaces of your phone.^[7]

- Don't use a paper towel or even a tissue since paper products can scratch up the surface of your device.



4 Wipe all surfaces with a 70% alcohol or Clorox disinfectant wipe. Use a pre-moistened disinfectant wipe or spray a little alcohol-based disinfectant on a clean microfiber cloth. Gently wipe down the screen and body of your mobile device, but take care not to get moisture into any of the ports or openings.[8]

- Alternatively, spray a glass cleaner or all-purpose spray onto a clean microfiber cloth. Then, use the cloth to wipe down your phone.[9]
- Avoid submerging your phone or spraying any kind of liquid cleaner or disinfectant directly on it.[11]
- Wipe your device gently to avoid damaging the oil-resistant coating. You can also avoid damage by using a screen protector and case on your phone or tablet.

Warning: Don't use harsh or abrasive cleaners like bleach, ammonia, acetone, vinegar, or kitchen and bathroom cleaner. These could damage your device and strip away the oil-resistant spray.[10]



5 Hand-wash phone cases and cables with soap and warm water. If your phone or other mobile device has a case, take it off your phone to clean it. Dampen a cloth using water and soap or gentle laundry detergent, then gently rub the case with it. Rinse it off with cold water, then allow it to air dry.^[12]

- Make sure your case is completely dry before you put it back on your device.
- Make a mixture of water and mild soap, such as dishwashing liquid or liquid hand soap, and dip a microfiber cloth in it. Wring out the cloth and wipe down your device's cables.^[13] Take care not to get any liquid in the electronic ports.



6 Wash your hands before and after handling your device. Most germs and viruses end up on your phone or other mobile devices through contact with your hands. To avoid contaminating your device, wash your hands with soap and warm water before you use it. Wash them again after you use it, especially if you haven't had a chance to disinfect your device recently.^[14]

- It's especially important to wash your hands before and after using your device if you've just gone to the bathroom, or you're about to handle food.

Method 2 of 2: Sanitizing Your Computer and Keyboard



1 Unplug your computer or keyboard before cleaning it. Before you clean your computer or keyboard, disconnect the power cord and all other cables. If possible, take out the batteries. Power down your device completely.^[15]

- Keeping your computer and keyboard unplugged and powered down will reduce your risk of electric shock.



2 Wipe down the outer case of your computer with a disinfectant wipe. Use an alcohol-based wipe (preferably at least 70% isopropyl alcohol) to wipe the screen and outer shell of your computer. Take special care not to let liquids run into any openings or ports.^[16]

- You can also dip a soft microfiber cloth in alcohol or water and a few drops of mild dish soap.
- Don't use tissue or paper towels since these could scratch up your case and screen.
- Never spray cleanser directly on your computer, since moisture could get inside and damage the electronic components.

Tip: You can protect your computer from contamination and make it easier to clean with a washable antimicrobial cover. Purchase these products online or from an electronics store.^[17]

3 Disinfect the touchscreen or display with 70% alcohol. Gently run a 70%-alcohol wipe over the display to clean it. Dry the screen when you're finished.^[18] Alternatively, you could put 70% rubbing alcohol on a microfiber cloth and gently wipe down the screen.

- If the manufacturer provides different instructions for cleaning and disinfecting the screen, follow those, instead.



4 Clean the keyboard with a cloth dampened with rubbing alcohol. Carefully wipe your keyboard and the spaces between the keys with a disinfectant wipe. 70% isopropyl alcohol wipes will work well. You can also moisten a microfiber cloth with a small amount of rubbing alcohol (at least 70%) and use that.^[19]

- Just take care not to use a soaking wet cloth or allow any liquid to seep into the small openings around your keys.
- While different computer manufacturers have different cleaning recommendations, healthcare professionals have found that alcohol wipes are generally safe and effective to use on computer keyboards.^[20]
- If there's obvious dust and debris on your keyboard, blow it away with a little compressed air. You can get a compressed air canister at an electronics or office supply store.

EXPERT TIP



JONATHAN TAVAREZ
Property Hygiene Enabler

Expert Warning: To ensure your devices are thoroughly sanitized, do not rely on lemon juice or vinegar as your primary cleaning products.



5 Allow your computer and keyboard to air dry. Once you've wiped down your computer and keyboard, let them sit for a while so the disinfectant can evaporate. This will give it more time to kill any germs and viruses on the surface. Wait until everything is completely dry before you plug in your computer and turn it back on.^[21]

- Most disinfectants need to sit on a surface for 3-5 minutes in order to work properly.^[22]



6 Wash your hands before and after using your keyboard. One of the best ways to keep your keyboard germ-free is to avoid getting germs on it in the first place. Wash your hands with soap and warm water before you sit down to use your computer. If other people have been using your keyboard or you have had it out in public, wash your hands after you're done, too.^[23]

- You're most likely to pick up germs from a keyboard that's been used by a lot of people or that you have handled after being in a public place without washing your hands.



Expert Q&A

Question

How do I properly disinfect my phone?



Jonathan Tavarez
Property Hygiene
Enabler
Expert Answer

To ensure your devices are thoroughly sanitized, do not rely on lemon juice or vinegar as your primary cleaning products.

Helpful 5 Not Helpful 0

Question

Can you sanitize Playtex® gloves with rubbing alcohol to get rid of coronavirus?



WikiaWang
Top Answerer

This really depends. Look into one important factor: how strong is your rubbing alcohol? Usually, anything with an alcohol percentage at at least 70% can kill coronavirus. So, yes, most of the time.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 6

Question

Can we use Clorox as a cleaner and is it effective against Covid-19?



WikiaWang
Top Answerer

Yes! Clorox has good disinfectant wipes that can kill COVID-19. Almost anything with an alcohol percentage over 70% can destroy Coronavirus when used properly.

Helpful 4 Not Helpful 4

Question

How can I safely clean my laptop without damaging it?



Community Answer

Use a microfiber cloth for cleaning screens. If you use paper towels or toilet paper, the screen will be streaked. Just make sure you don't spray any chemical directly to the computer screen. And always, spray directly onto the microfiber cloth.

Helpful 3 Not Helpful 3

Question

What happens when you sanitize your device too much?



Butterfly
Community Answer

Sanitizing your device too much could result in the screen getting damaged after a few months. The screen may become blue-black, the text on the screen may become blurry or the device might stop functioning because of tiny droplets of water and alcohol seeping in through tiny gaps into delicate internal parts of the device. To keep such consequences at bay, disinfect your device only after spending time with it in a public space.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 0

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Z7gmD5FOJ4>



Warnings

- There are a variety of UVB light-based disinfectants on the market that you can use to get rid of microbes on phones, but they are not medical-grade and it's not clear whether they kill the coronavirus. Use caution and don't rely on these devices to keep you safe. UV light can also cause skin sunburn and skin damage if you're exposed to it for too long.[24]

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About This Article



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This article was medically reviewed by [Alicia Sokolowski](#) and by wikiHow staff writer, [Megaera Lorenz, PhD](#). Alicia Sokolowski is a Green Cleaning Specialist and the President and co-CEO of AspenClean, a green cleaning company in Vancouver, British Columbia. With over 17 years of experience, Alicia specializes in creating a healthier, green alternative to chemical-based cleaning products and services. AspenClean develops and manufactures its own line of 100% Natural, EcoCert® certified, and EWG verified™ cleaning products. AspenClean's glass cleaner was voted Parent's Green Pick 2020 by readers of the Parents' magazine. Alicia holds a CPA designation and a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and Finance from the University of Toronto. This article has been viewed 55,290 times.

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