



# Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces to Help Prevent the Spread of Flu Virus

This fact sheet explains how cleaning and disinfecting surfaces in homes and public places (like schools, childcare centers and businesses) can help prevent the spread of the flu virus.

## Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces

- Keep hard surfaces like kitchen countertops, tabletops, desktops and bathroom surfaces clean and disinfected.
- Keep surfaces touched by more than one person clean and disinfected. Examples of these surfaces include doorknobs, refrigerator door handles and microwaves.
- Use disposable sanitizer cloths to wipe electronic items that are touched often, such as phones, computers, remote controls and hand-held games.
- **When surfaces are not visibly dirty**
  - Clean the surface with a commercial product that is both a detergent (cleans) and a disinfectant (kills germs). These products can be used when surfaces are not visibly dirty.
- **When surfaces are visibly dirty**
  - Wash the surface with a general household cleaner (soap or detergent), rinse with water and follow with a disinfectant. This method should be used for visibly dirty surfaces.
- **If commercial disinfectants are not available**
  - Use a chlorine bleach solution made by adding 1 tablespoon of bleach to a quart (4 cups) of water; use a cloth to apply this to surfaces and let stand for 3-5 minutes before rinsing with clean water. Wear gloves to protect your hands when working with strong bleach solutions.
- **Important reminders**
  - Do not mix disinfectants and cleaners unless the labels indicate it is safe to do so. Combining certain products (such as chlorine bleach and ammonia cleaners) can be harmful.
  - Follow label instructions carefully when using disinfectants and cleaners.
  - Pay attention to any hazard warnings and instructions on the labels for using personal protective items (such as household gloves).

## For more information

To learn more about how to protect yourself from the swine flu, visit the Department of Health's Swine Flu Information Web site at [www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu](http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu)