

Overview

- Disinfectant is a solution that can be used to kill germs on surfaces, bedding, clothing and dead bodies.
- It is especially useful in epidemics to kill the germs that are causing the epidemic.
- Many different ingredients can be added to water to create disinfectants.
- Making disinfectants can be dangerous because it involves mixing chemicals with water. Always follow the instructions and use the help of trained people to make disinfectants.
- Look at the cholera kit (see Action tool 6) for more information on the preparation and use of disinfectants.

Disinfectants are especially useful in the following cases:

- In cholera and acute watery diarrhoea epidemics, they can be used to disinfect beds and surfaces that have been in contact with vomit or diarrhoea. Disinfectants should also be used to disinfect the bodies, before their burial, of people who die from cholera in the community or a clinic.
- In Ebola , Marburg fever , Lassa Fever , plague , MERS and monkeypox outbreaks, because these diseases can spread as a result of almost any contact with the sick person, disinfectants are vital for cleaning surfaces and other objects that a sick person may have touched, and for cleaning dead bodies. Other items used by a sick person, such as clothing and sheets, should be burned, where possible in an incinerator. (See Action tool 40)
- Disinfectants keep health facilities such as clinics and hospitals clean and reduce the spread of disease among patients. Remember to clean the latrines as well.
- Chlorine can also be used to treat water for drinking and other purposes. This can only be done by volunteers who are trained and under the supervision of a water and sanitation specialist.

Preparation of different strengths of chlorine solution

Type	2%	0.5%	0.2%	0.05%
HTH powder (70% active chlorine)	30 grams in 1 litre of water or 2 level tablespoons in 1 litre of water	7.5g in 1 litre of water or 1 level teabspoon in 2 litres of water	3g in 1 litre of water or 2 level teabspoon in 10 litres of water	0.7g in 1 litre of water or 0.5 level teabspoons in 10 litres of water
NaDCC At 8.68g active chlorine per tablet	4 tablets in 1 litre of water	1 tablet in 1 litre of water	4 tablets in 10 litres of water	1 tablet in 10 litres of water

Type	2%	0.5%	0.2%	0.05%
Liquid bleach (5%)	400 ml of bleach in 600 ml of water (total amount one litre)	100 ml of bleach in 900 ml of water (total amount one litre)	40 ml of bleach in 960 ml of water (total amount one litre)	10 ml of bleach in 990 ml of water (total amount one litre)
Examples of use	To disinfect dead bodies, stools and vomit in cholera outbreak	To disinfect dead bodies, surfaces, blood, vomit, stool, PPE, vehicles etc. in Ebola outbreak	To disinfect wards, floors, toilets, shower units, kitchen, beds etc. in cholera outbreak	To disinfect hands and skin

Use of disinfectants

- Always take care when using disinfectants because they are dangerous. Always wear gloves, a face mask and goggles, and an apron or overalls to protect your clothes.
- When specialists are available, always follow their advice on preparing, handling and using disinfectants.
- Do not touch 1:10 disinfectant with your hands or let it touch your bare skin. **Always use thick gloves for protection.**