

Lysol Disinfectant Approved for Use Against COVID-19: Here's What Else Can Work



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You can easily create disinfectant with bleach at home. Getty Images

- There are two disinfectant products now approved to work against the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2.

- They are effective at neutralizing over 99 percent of the virus.
- But if not available, experts say other common products can also be very effective.

Two Lysol products have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use against the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. The products are Lysol Disinfectant Spray and Lysol Disinfectant Max Cover Mist, both approved last week for use on hard, nonporous surfaces.

A peer-reviewed study published in the American Journal of Infection Control in May is the first comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of products like Lysol to combat the virus.

The findings indicate a greater than 99.9 percent efficacy against SARS-CoV-2.

While there are already over 400 products the EPA lists as effective against emerging viral pathogens and human coronavirus, the Lysol products are the first to be tested directly against SARS-CoV-2.

“The best scientific studies indicate that alcohol-containing solutions of at least 60 percent proof are most effective in killing viruses like SARS-CoV-2 that are non-enveloped viruses. Lysol has 40.33 percent alcohol and other ingredients that may be effective,” Dr. Carl Fichtenbaum, professor of clinical medicine, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, told [name removed].

Lysol products must be used as directed

Within 2 minutes of contact, both Lysol products killed the virus, according to a press release from Reckitt Benckiser Group, the makers of Lysol.

“Each EPA-approved disinfectant has their own product directions. It’s very important that you read the product descriptions to ensure proper use,” said Dr. Jay Woody, FACEP, chief medical officer of Intuitive Health and a co-founder of Legacy ER & Urgent Care.

The company that makes Lysol emphasized that these products should never be used on your body.

“As a global leader in health and hygiene products, we must be clear that under no circumstance should our disinfectant products be administered into the human body (through injection, ingestion or any other route). As with all products, our disinfectant and hygiene products should only be used as intended and in line with usage guidelines. Please read the label and safety information,” said Reckitt Benckiser Group in a statement.

Experts warn that you should protect yourself when using these powerful disinfectants.

Dr. Nikhil Bhayani, infectious disease specialist with Texas Health Resources, advised that labels contain critical instructions for safe and

effective use, “including precautions you should take when applying the product.” This includes wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during application.

What if these products aren’t available?

Lysol disinfectants flew off the shelves in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic as Americans rushed to grocery stores to stockpile on cleaning products, reported CNN.

“Stock of product on shelves will vary day by day and it may be helpful to ask your retailer when they will be receiving their next shipments,” Lysol said recently on social media. “We also ask that consumers purchase only what they need so that everyone can work together to stop the spread.”

Woody explained that while many disinfectants are out of stock right now, bleach is readily available and is a popular disinfection product that has been proven to kill germs, including bacteria and viruses.

“Other compounds useful in killing viruses include quaternary ammonium and sodium hypochlorite,” added Fichtenbaum.

There’s a difference between cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, Woody explained: “Bleach should not be used to clean surfaces. To clean surfaces, use soap and water.”

Moreover, like Lysol, bleach should never be used on, or in, your body.

“Bleach should only be mixed with plain water,” said Woody. “Bleach should never be used on skin or injected for any reason.”

He warned that bleach is highly toxic, and “if ever bleach is injected or comes into contact with skin, the individual should seek medical attention immediately.”

How to make disinfectant with bleach

Woody said you can make your own bleach mixture to effectively kill germs.

“The solution should be 1 cup bleach with 5 gallons of water.” He said the bleach solution should be applied to clean surfaces only, and it must be allowed to air-dry for 10 minutes before wiping it off.

However, for smaller batches, Woody said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 4 teaspoons of bleach mixed with 1 quart of water.

“Bleach should only be mixed with plain water,” he cautioned. “Bleach should never be used on skin or injected for any reason.”

The bottom line

The EPA has approved two Lysol products as effective against the virus that causes COVID-19.

Researchers have found that Lysol Disinfectant Spray and Lysol Disinfectant Max Cover Mist can kill SARS-CoV-2 on hard, nonporous surfaces within 2 minutes.

However, increased demand for disinfectants has caused shortages. Experts say that when EPA-approved disinfectants aren't available, a mixture of bleach and water can effectively disinfect surfaces.