

Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



Knowing – and understanding – each can help you reduce germs on surfaces throughout your facility.

You may think that wiping down surfaces with either a diluted solution in a bucket or spray bottle is a quick, easy way to keep these areas germ-free. But there's a big difference between cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. Each has its advantages, but not all methods are created equal. Find out what sets them apart and how you can get the most out of all three in your facility.



dirt &
soils

CLEANING

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines cleaning as the removal of foreign material from an object. These materials can include food waste, soils, and grease. Cleaners – as they're identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – are substances or mixture of substances that clean away or remove inanimate material from a surface.

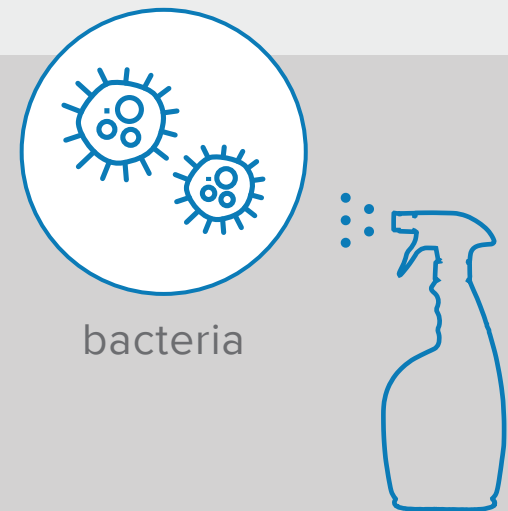
It's important to note that these specifications don't include any mention of germs. Cleaning is simply the removal of dirt and grime from surfaces or objects.

this is where it
gets interesting...

SANITIZING

Surface sanitizers and disinfectants are both regulated by the EPA to reduce microorganisms on surfaces. The main difference is efficacy. Sanitizers reduce the bacterial population but do not destroy or eliminate all bacteria on surfaces. Instead, they reduce the number of bacteria on a surface to a safe level – generally without needing a rinse step.

According to EPA regulations, sanitizers are allowed to make antibacterial claims but cannot make claims for other types of organisms – i.e., viruses and fungi.



bacteria

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bacteria,
viruses, & fungi



DISINFECTING

Disinfectants are the most effective category, and the EPA defines them as substances or mixtures of substances that destroy or irreversibly inactivate bacteria, fungi, and viruses. Since they feature the broadest spectrum of activity, disinfectants provide the most effectiveness against different kinds of microorganisms.

Most disinfectants, however, do require rinsing after use on food-contact surfaces, since they can leave harmful residues on surfaces.

When it comes to eliminating germs on surfaces, understanding the differences between products can help you provide a clean, welcoming environment for guests, customers, and employees. To find the best combination of products, remember to:



Read and understand what's on the product label – safety warnings, efficacy levels, and usage instructions will tell you if the product meets your needs.



Look for products with broad spectrum efficacy and fast kill times – not all sanitizers are created equal, so make sure you're maximizing your investment.



Know where the products are being used – now that you know the differences, make sure you're using the right product for the job.



Firmly establish cleaning and sanitation practices – even the most effective products can't help if staff members aren't properly trained or using the products.