

What is the difference between cleaning and disinfecting?

We have received many questions about cleaning and disinfecting our products. Please follow the link below to access a list of all Designtex high-performance products that have been rigorously vetted for bleach cleanability. Bleach cleanability is denoted with either a 4:1 or 10:1 ratio for dilution in water. For example, Designtex products listed as "4:1" are cleanable with a 4:1 water-to-bleach dilution, for the lifetime of the product. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a minimum of 10:1 bleach cleanable ratio for proper disinfecting of surfaces.

Cleaning and **disinfecting** are not the same; products that are used for soil and stain removal may not be effective disinfectants. Conversely, products that disinfect may not be effective for soil and stain removal.

Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting refers to using chemicals, for example, EPA-registered disinfectants, to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface *after* cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading the infection.

Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process **works by either cleaning or disinfecting** surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection. (CDC)

Are antimicrobials needed for disinfecting viruses like COVID 19?

We do not recommend antimicrobial textile treatments as a defense against COVID-19. Antimicrobial treatments protect the product from degradation by microbes and bacteria. They are not intended to decrease infection among humans, and do not work against viruses.

What are the cleaning and disinfecting recommendations from the CDC for COVID-19?

Please click on this [link](#) for access to the CDC's recommendations.

What are the EPA-registered disinfectants that can be used on materials for COVID-19?

Please click on this [link](#) for a list of EPA-registered disinfectants.

Resources

You may find a list of our High Performance Bleach Cleanable Textiles [here](#) and the Designtex Cleaning Manual [here](#).

Glossary

Alcohol isopropyl and ethyl alcohol at 55-70%, and usually used in combination with quaternary ammonium salts or as 70% isopropyl alcohol, can be effective against Mycobacterium tuberculosis. (Alcohol is limited in use but is typically used when it's convenient, for example – alcohol wipes might be in the room and a staff person will use them for minor cleaning.)

Bleach sodium hypochlorite² in a 5.25 - 6.25% dilution is an intermediate level disinfectant (use label recommendation for mixing bleach with water – typical is 10:1 water to bleach). Bleach is one of the few agents that are registered and tested as effective against Clostridium difficile, although chlorine dioxide has also been tested by the EPA as efficacious.

Contact time (aka Dwell time, aka Kill time) amount of time recommended by the manufacturer that a disinfectant is required to be on the surface to be effective

Germicide an agent that can kill microorganisms, particularly pathogenic or disease-causing germs.

Hospital Grade Disinfectant A low-level disinfectant that is registered by the EPA for pesticidal control of microorganisms which pose a threat to human health. Hospital disinfectants are tested by the EPA after release into the market to verify antimicrobial claims and chemical formulations.

Peroxide in a 3.0% solution, sometimes accelerated with acid, hydrogen peroxide can be either a low or intermediate level disinfectant, depending on the specific product formulation. Some peroxide products meet the EcoLogo product labeling requirements and may be used in green cleaning programs adopted by healthcare facilities to meet green certification requirements.

Phenolic intermediate level disinfectants that are effective against Mycobacterium tuberculosis: however, due to toxicity and environmental concerns they are being phased out of common use.

Quaternary Ammonium (Quats) low level disinfectants that will kill most bacteria, viruses and fungi. Some Quats alone without phenolics or alcohol may not be effective against Mycobacterium tuberculosis but are commonly used as the routine disinfectant product in healthcare applications. Quaternary ammonium compounds effectively remove and/or inactivate lesser-resistant microorganisms such as Staphylococcus aureus, vancomycin-resistant Enterococcus, P. aeruginosa] from surfaces.

Rinsing Protocol instructions for rinsing a surface with water or a clean damp cloth to remove residue left by cleaners and/or disinfectants. Rinsing is required for all Designtex surfaces.