

# Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting Personal Equipment

Routine cleaning, sanitizing and/or disinfecting personal equipment including wheelchairs, walkers, canes, oxygen tank holders, etc. is important to keep germs from spreading and prevent illness.

## Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting – What’s the Difference?



**Cleaning** *removes* most dirt, germs, etc. from surfaces or objects like walkers, canes, etc. Cleaning includes the use of a mild detergent (soap) and a clean cloth followed by water to remove the detergent.



**Sanitizing** *reduces* germs on surfaces or objects to levels considered safe. It’s possible to sanitize by cleaning or disinfecting or a combination of both. Sanitizing includes the use of weaker bleach solutions or sanitizing sprays.



**Disinfecting** *kills* most germs on surfaces or objects. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides lists of approved registered disinfectants (see link or scan QR code below).

## What to Know Before You Start

Some products used to sanitize and/or disinfect (such as bleach) can cause a chemical reaction that breaks down surfaces (corrosion). It is important to:

- ✓ Check with the manufacturer of the equipment to learn what products are recommended to clean, sanitize and/or disinfect the equipment.
- ✓ Check with the manufacturer of the product to learn what personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, masks, etc., should be worn while using the recommended product to clean the equipment.
- ✓ Read the product label carefully to understand how to use the product and the contact time (the amount of time a disinfectant should stay wet) needed to ensure the product is effective. Contact time is also known as dwell time or wet time.

## Learn More

[Difference Between Products that Disinfect, Sanitize, and Clean Surfaces](#)



[When and How to Clean and Disinfect Your Home](#)



[Selected EPA-Registered Disinfectants](#)



[How To Read A Label](#)



[LeadingAge VA Model IPC Policies Resource Library](#)

