

## COVID-19: Cleaning

### Cleaning tips for consideration

COVID-19 is transferred through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, Lung Foundation Australia recommends all Australians living with a lung disease or lung cancer stay home where possible and practice social distancing when performing essential activities, because people living with chronic conditions or who are immunocompromised are at greater risk of a serious infection.

COVID-19 can spread through contaminated objects and scientists have discovered that the virus can survive on surfaces for hours and potentially even [days](#). Although it is not the main cause of the spread, it is possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object where droplets from an infected person have landed and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. We have collated a list of recommendations for maintaining good hygiene at home.

Cleaning may feel overwhelming if you are suffering from shortness of breath or fatigue. Use pacing strategies—you don't have to complete it all at once—attempt cleaning one item or room, then have a break. If there is someone else in your household that can do the cleaning, encourage them to assist with the additional preventative measures.

If you have a carer who assists with cleaning and/or tasks of living, encourage them to:

- Take off their shoes before they enter your home
- Wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds as soon as they enter your home, and regularly for the duration of their visit
- Clean any high-touch surfaces that they use, such as doorknobs, and light switches
- Practice social distancing within your home.

### **Clean high-touch surfaces and objects**

Wipe down all frequently touched surfaces and regularly handled objects with a detergent solution.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Tables
- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Countertops
- Desks
- Toilets
- Faucets
- Sinks
- Keys

Consider using an antibacterial wipe to clean electronics, such as telephones and mobiles, TV remotes, keyboards, and tablets, but always follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid any damage.

### **Practice good hand hygiene, even at home**

We've heard it many times but washing your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds throughout the day is imperative. One way to become infected is to transfer the virus from a contaminated surface to your face or mouth by touching. Remember, this is especially important if you've been out of the house.

### **Take your shoes off before you enter the home**

It's no surprise that shoes are a breeding ground for germs. Removing shoes before entering the home or having designated indoor and outdoor shoes is a good precaution to take, especially for families with children who may climb on furniture or play with shoes.

### **Designate an area for keys, wallets, phones, and sunglasses**

Decide on a designated space in your home for frequently used items that leave the house such as keys, wallets, and sunglasses. It's a good idea to choose one area to store them in and ensure you wash your hands thoroughly after touching them.

### **Take care when touching items brought in from outside**

During this time, don't assume everyone is following best-practice hygiene measures. If you are unpacking groceries, avoid touching your face and wash your hands immediately afterwards.

### **Clean your mobile phone**

If you're like most people, you probably touch your phone often and, at times, hold it up to your face while on calls.

Here are some tips for keeping your phone clean:

- Clean your phone regularly with antibacterial wipes
- Avoid letting others touch your phone; if they do, make sure they wash their hands before and afterwards.

To avoid damage to your device, consult the manufacturer's website for any specific instructions that they might have.

### **What products to use?**

There is a lot of inaccurate information available about which products you should be using to clean your home. Cleaning and disinfecting are advised to help limit the spread of the virus and most

everyday cleaning products will be suitable for thorough cleaning, but to kill the virus, you need to use a disinfectant.

Cleaning products can irritate sensitive airways. If you are the person living with a lung condition and doing the cleaning, ensure the house is well ventilated by opening windows and turning on any fans.

If someone else is able to do the cleaning, still ventilate your home, but you may wish to sit outside during the cleaning process as well as for a period of time afterwards.

It is important to note that natural cleaning products (e.g. vinegar) are not as effective as commercial cleaners and disinfectants. Most natural or "eco-cleaners" are unlikely to kill the virus. Be careful not to mix different cleaning products, as this can create dangerous solutions that are likely to be ineffective.

Either dispose of or wash any re-useable cloths and wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds afterwards.

Remember, practicing social distancing and good personal hygiene is the best way to reduce the spread of the virus, so don't let these measures overwhelm you. Stay connected and reach out to your loved ones for support, even if it is just for a virtual cup of tea.

Lung Foundation Australia is also here to provide information, support and guidance about COVID-19 or your lung health. Contact our Information and Support Centre team via freecall **1800 654 301** (option 3).