

Providing Peace of Mind for Residents, Staff, and Family Members through Disinfection

When reporting on a survey of Americans involved in selecting senior living communities, [McKnight's Long-Term Care News](#) revealed that 96% of respondents ranked "cleanliness" as important or extremely important when choosing a senior living situation.

For seniors, concerns about life in a facility include cleanliness and other factors. In a [survey published by Care.com](#), senior respondents said their number one concern about living in a senior community was safety.

With the cleanliness and safety of a facility playing such prominent roles in selection criteria, how can your facility reassure residents, staff, and family members that you are providing a clean environment?

Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting your facility are the three primary ways you can achieve a safe environment for your residents and staff. However, it is important to understand that these three methods vary in efficacy, [as explained by the CDC](#):



Method	Cleaning	Sanitizing	Disinfecting
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes debris, dirt, and dust using soap and water Increases the efficacy of the disinfectant Does not destroy infectious fungi, bacteria, and viruses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often relies on chemicals Lowers bacterial contaminants to safe levels, as judged by public health standards Does not use materials from EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19 Must kill 99.999% of the specific test bacteria in 30 seconds to qualify as a sanitizer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be chemical or physical Destroys harmful microorganisms When combined with cleaning, offers the best defense against possible risk of exposure to microorganisms
Efficacy	Low	Medium	High Destroys 99.9% of bacteria & viruses



So how do you know when to clean or when to disinfect?

The CDC has shared the following guidelines:

When to clean: When no people with confirmed or suspected infections are known to have been in a space, cleaning once a day should be sufficient to remove microorganisms that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy indoor environment.

What to use: products containing soap or detergent to reduce germs on surfaces.

When to disinfect: When a person with a confirmed case of infection has been in a space, to destroy or inactivate microorganisms on surfaces; this disinfection further reduces microbial loads present in a space.

What to use: disinfectants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19](#).

A combination of cleaning and disinfection is most effective if you want to reduce harmful microorganisms in your shared spaces. Furthermore, over-communicating those protocols internally through resident education and signage and externally through means like social media, email, and PR efforts will help increase awareness of the care you are taking to improve indoor environmental quality for your residents, staff, and visitors.

By enacting careful cleaning and disinfecting protocols, you can provide residents, staff, and families with the peace of mind they need to know that your facility is striving to create healthy indoor environments.