

# CLEANING, SANITIZING & DISINFECTING HARD SURFACES IN THE HOME KITCHEN

- Cleaning: Physically removing dirt and debris from surfaces, usually with water, soap/detergent, and scrubbing. Cleaning alone is not sufficient to remove pathogens.
- Sanitizing: Reducing pathogens to a safe level so that illness, contamination or spoilage is unlikely to occur.
- Disinfecting: Destroying most pathogenic and other microorganisms. Disinfectants destroy or irreversibly inactivate the specific microorganisms listed on their labels (but they may not inactivate spores).

Sanitizing is generally considered the acceptable level for treating home kitchen surfaces. However, if there are vulnerable persons in the home (elderly, pregnant women; children under age 5; or severely ill or immune-compromised individuals), then disinfecting would be appropriate. For known or suspected cases of COVID-19, follow current CDC guidance.

## STEP 1: CLEAN

Wash with warm, soapy water, then rinse well. *Note:* Soils and soaps can inactivate bleach solutions, so it is important to clean surfaces and then rinse well. Further, cross-contamination can occur by using dirty cleaning cloths, so be sure to use a fresh, clean cloth or a paper towel.

## STEP 2: SANITIZE OR DISINFECT

If using a commercial sanitizer or disinfectant, follow the manufacturer’s instructions. Note that disinfectants are not always safe for food contact surfaces, and not all bleaches are intended to be used as disinfectants, so be sure to carefully read the label. To make a generic bleach solution, use the chart below.

To Sanitize		To Disinfect	
Bleach	Water	Bleach	Water
1 tablespoon	1 gallon	5 tablespoons (1/3 cup)	1 gallon
1 teaspoon	1 quart	4 teaspoons	1 quart
¼ teaspoon	1 cup	1 teaspoon	1 cup

Add the appropriate amount of **regular, unscented liquid chlorine bleach** to cool (not hot) water. Spray surfaces (or immerse item) completely with the solution. Allow to air dry, or let stand/soak for at least 1 minute then dry with a clean towel. Bleach solutions should be changed every 24 hours and preferably be made from bleach containers that have been opened for no more than 30 days. Be sure to check the expiry date on containers as well. Take appropriate precautions when handling bleach solutions or other chemicals: Apply in a ventilated area and wear disposable or dedicated cleaning gloves and protective clothing.

For **food contact surfaces**, use a sanitizing solution only. Be sure to measure carefully, apply the solution or soak items for 1 minute, then **rinse well** and allow to air dry.

### Resources:

USDA and CDC

North Carolina State University, North Dakota State University, and University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Services, and Oklahoma State University Factsheet FAPC-116 Food Safety Magazine, April/May 2019 and August/September 2011

